

## Montana Wetland Council Meeting Summary

Wednesday September 23, 2009  
DEQ Directors Conference Room  
1520 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Helena Montana

### **Welcome and Introductions.**

[Lynda Saul](#), DEQ Wetland Program Coordinator and Wetland Council Chair welcomed participants to the fall 2009 Montana Wetland Council meeting and asked people to introduce themselves. Please see the [sign-in list](#). Lynda reviewed the previous two Council meetings in 2009 and follow up activities resulting from the meetings.

In January, the Council explored integrating wetlands into water restoration planning and restoration activities. As follow up, DEQ Wetland Program wrote and received an EPA grant to work with 2 watershed groups to demonstrate integration wetlands into DEQ 319 watershed restoration plans and activities. [Steve Carpenedo](#) is lead on this project and will be working with [Tom Hinz](#) of the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership.

In May, the Council held a joint stewardship award ceremony with the Watershed Coordination Council followed by a riparian area protection panel. As follow up, DEQ Wetland Program is contracting with the Montana Association of Conservation District to conduct streamside best management practices listening sessions in 14 communities across the state and outreach to others. The final product will prioritize and document successful streamside BMP's by category.

### **Wetland Strategic Framework Working Group Reports.**

[Lynda Saul](#), DEQ. *Vulnerable Wetland and Public Policy Working Group.*

This Working Group addresses diverse issues and has found that independent ad hoc issue based groups are a good approach to address these Strategic Directions.

1) Wetland water rights. DNRC is pursuing official rule making for water use appropriations for wetlands. Upcoming meeting for those interested to learn about policy, legal issues, and mechanics of how define wetlands for water rights, how to calculate water needed for a wetland water right. There will be opportunity for discussion and input into the draft rules. Meeting is Tues Oct 20, 1-4 pm. Room 111 DEQ. Other meetings will be scheduled and DNRC will hold an official hearing on the proposed rules.

2) Streamside best management practices. Riparian wetlands are the largest category of wetlands in Montana and are currently being impacted and at risk from additional incompatible land use. The Governor's Task Force for Riparian Protection is engaged in the Streamside BMP listening sessions previously described.

3) Channel migration zone studies. Based on experience in several Montana watersheds, DEQ is contracting with the Ruby Valley Conservation District and Flathead Lakers to provide science based information and mapping resources for integration in the county's and watershed groups GIS. Purpose is to assist local entities with riparian and wetland decision making.

4) Strategic floodplain mapping. Team includes local floodplain managers and DNRC to prioritize areas for floodplain mapping. If floodplains are mapped, then local governments have the ability to regulate within the delineated floodplain, if not then land use decisions tend to be piecemeal and reactionary.

5) The Montana Partnership involved 27 entities: conservation, industry, agencies and is exploring conservation and restoration needs on private lands in Montana. Have identified that a new funding source would help meet Montana's voluntary conservation and restoration needs for fish and wildlife habitat on private lands. Consultants completed a "Montana Land Conservation Financing Study". Looking for input soon. Provided examples of voluntary restoration funding in other states such as MN, WY, and CO.

[Linda Vance](#), MTNHP. *Mapping, Assessment and Monitoring Working Group.*

Ad hoc group to first, identify monitoring objectives state wide and then develop a monitoring strategy. Canvassed people asking what do you want to know about wetland condition across Montana? Then need to standardize and integrate methodologies. Regarding mapping, the National Wetlands Inventory (a 1974 unfunded mandate) has not been completed and existing riparian areas are now being mapped concurrently with NWI. The MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping Center has taken on mapping with various funding sources. A goal is to integrate mapping and monitoring. MTNHP has institute a 5 year plan to assess the conditions of wetlands in Montana. Identifying what should be the next basin and where to we need to focus mapping and then assessment. Funding is from EPA, BLM, and others. The Working Group will talk this fall and see where the priorities come together and determine how we want to see the conditions and wetlands tracked.

[Tom Hinz](#), DFWP. *Restoration Working Group/Wetlands Legacy Partnership.*

[PowerPoint highlighted Spring Wetland and Habitat Tour](#) in the Centennial in June, 2008.

Tours and site visits to wetland projects is a primary tool the partners use to engage and involve practioners and the public in Restoration Projects. [Priceless Resources Strategic Direction #4](#) emphasizes actions including continued support for the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership, working with DNRC to identify wetland/riparian restoration opportunities on school trust lands; ensuring that on-the-ground projects are included into a central database; and securing a long term funding base for Legacy Partnership activities. Developing a wetland, stream, and other aquatic resource mitigation crediting program is one of the group's priorities based on the Strategic Framework. DEQ/FWP submitted an EPA Wetland Program Development Grant proposal for the development of an In Lieu Fee Aquatic Resource Mitigation program for Montana, but EPA did not rank this project high enough for funding. The Intermountain West Joint Venture, Ducks Unlimited, NRCS, and partners have been collaborating on facilitating delivery of Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) grazing pilot Program in some watersheds in Montana. Pictures of ongoing Legacy Projects including the O'Dell Creek Headwaters restoration project in the middle Madison which reached its 5-year milestone in 2009. Partners in the Blackfoot, Flathead/Mission, and the Madison are working together to reintroduce swans into historic breeding areas. This program is now in its 5th year. For the first time, five Blackfoot trumpeters were instrumented with radio or satellite telemetry which will allow school groups and others to track these birds' movements via the internet. In addition to the need for new project funding sources and continued funding for long term projects, other ongoing challenges for the Restoration Working group is dealing with available surface water which in some watersheds is very limited.

[Steve Carpenedo](#), DEQ. *Public Education and Professional Training Working Group.*

This Working Group held its first meeting in March 2009 and attended by five individuals representing four different organizations. From this meeting a [work plan for 2009](#) was drafted. Based on the work plan, the education group has worked with the Montana WaterCourse to help fund a mini-grant for students conducting wetland and riparian projects, helped fund an accredited Realtor training workshop in Ravalli County, and worked with Montana Water Center to help fund a wetlands module in the “Decision Makers Guide to Wetlands”. Two proposal ideas were developed in the working group meeting that were submitted to EPA Wetland Program Development Grants. One proposal, “Developing a Framework for Integrating Wetlands into Watershed Restoration Planning” was funded. Another proposal to “Build Wetland Program Capacity in Montana” was not ranked high enough by EPA Region 8 for funding despite being the highest ranked proposal by the DEQ Wetland Program.

The DEQ Wetland Program has also updated the [Wetland Clearinghouse](#), with lots of new information including how to access wetland maps, Wetland Council and Working Groups, state and federal wetland policy. People are encouraged to visit the website. Any comments or needed corrections can be sent to [Steve Carpenedo](#).

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### **Council Meeting Focus.**

Lynda introduced the Council meeting focus on tools and resources available for local governments, Conservation Districts, watershed groups, Tribes, and others to help identify, protect, and manage wetlands and riparian resources. This topic is in line with our state [Conservation Strategy – Strategic Direction #5](#): to assist local government entities with planning and growth management information, resources, and tools needed to protect wetlands and riparian areas, particularly in regions with rapid population growth and development potential. Local governments are concerned with land use and the benefits wetlands provide for their community. Local governments have an interest in ensuring the compatibility of the land use that occurs on and around wetlands in order to help direct patterns of development, community character, tax base, demand for services and response to hazards. There are many resources at the regional and the national level include [ELI's Planners Guide to Wetland Buffers for Local Governments](#). Montana has a lot of resources at the scientific research level, the planning and coordination level, developing web-based tools, maps, new programs, and other resources to help with protection of wetland and riparian resources and assist those on the ground decision makers. This meeting highlights a broad cross section of individuals and entities working to create and share this information in Montana including federal, university, agency, local government, NGO, watershed group with Council participants. Reminded folks that it's important to integrate science into the decision making process. It's not enough just to develop the tools, our role should also be to help make sure that these resources and tools are used and useful at the local level.

**[A Conservation Information Geodatabase for Watershed Planning – An example in the Ruby Valley.](#)** *Meghan Burns, Landscape Ecologist MTNHP and Linda Vance, Senior Ecologist/Spatial Analysis Lab Director MTNHP.*

This project demonstrated how wetland mapping and a conservation geodatabase could be used effectively at a watershed scale and incorporate wetlands into watershed planning. The presentation pointed out that grant funds have been used to develop this tool

and other web applications, but funding is usually not available to maintain these products. The MTNHP Wetland and Riparian Mapping Center would like to address the lack of digital maps in Montana and asked individuals or organizations to contact them with wetland and riparian mapping needs. MTNHP can use existing grant funding to work with one or two more watershed groups to produce similar geodatabases and can produce training materials that would help watershed group coordinators heighten their “geographic literacy” and learn conservation-specific GIS using. Megan has a background in teaching GIS and will investigate options.

### **Crucial Areas and Connectivity Assessment.**

***Janet Hess-Herbert, Data Services Supervisor, Dept Fish Wildlife & Parks.***

The Crucial Areas and Connectivity Assessment ([summary document](#)) is an enhancement to Montana’s Fish and Wildlife Comprehensive Strategy. Because Montana lacks a complete National Wetland Inventory and riparian layer for the state, an alternate approach was needed to identify these resources for this study. Janet discussed the information used to create the [wetland and riparian data layer](#) for the Crucial Areas and Connectivity Assessment. DFWP would like feedback from the wetland community on the layer they created.

DFWP also would like feedback on the species associated with riparian and wetland areas which is needed to clearly identify the value of wetland and riparian areas in the Crucial Areas and Connectivity Assessment.

### **Mitigating the Impacts of Subdivision on Fish and Wildlife.**

***Doris Fischer, Land Use Planning Specialist, Montana Dept Fish Wildlife & Parks.***

In order to help local governments, the Commerce Department developed and has revised model subdivision regulations since the 1970’s. Montana state law requires local governments to consider the impacts of a proposed subdivision on "wildlife and wildlife habitat" and the law authorizes local governments to require reasonable mitigation of potentially significant adverse impacts. However, wildlife and wildlife habitat have been only minimally addressed in model subdivision regulations.

A group of 20 Montana biologists and land use planners is working to develop some recommended standards for subdivision development that will help developers select more suitable properties and design more fish and wildlife-friendly projects. The group is focusing on six main objectives, including preserving water bodies, with standards to help achieve each objective. Research, scientific literature, and professional biologist opinion can provide the basis for standards.

Stream side setbacks have extensive scientific data showing the benefits of stream side vegetative buffers to wildlife and wildlife habitat. The Department of Commerce land use attorney has indicated that it is legal to include stream side setback standards in local subdivision regulations. Model subdivision regulations could provide a good example of how local governments can establish a minimum buffer width, with the capability to required wider buffers where needed for wildlife and wildlife habitat protection. Developers should visit with a local biologist before planning out their subdivision design, so that they have a feel for what specific fish and wildlife-related standards will apply. If there is a need for environmental assessment, there should be a well-done wildlife impact portion of the environmental assessment. Currently, wildlife and wildlife habitat concerns are typically considered late in the process, and this often involves redesigning the project or ignoring those impacts.

Often subdivision regulations are the only tool a local government has for managing growth and protecting resources that are important to the community. The group hopes to submit standards to the Department of Commerce in November, for incorporation into the larger set of updated model subdivision regulations to be released sometime next year.

### **Bitterroot Riparian Best Management Practices Group**

**Laurie Riley**, Executive Director, Bitter Root Water Forum.

**Tom Parker**, Principle, Geum Environmental Consulting, Inc.

This presentation discussed two aspects of the citizen-based Bitterroot Riparian Best Management Practices Group. The group formed in response to the November 2008 vote which revoked the Ravalli County Growth Policy. The group's primary initial focus is providing a volunteer team of technical experts available to work with landowners, realtors, builders, architects or others who intend to develop land near streams, wetlands or other water resources. When invited, volunteer experts go on site with the landowner and identify attributes and information for the landowner to consider when developing the property to help protect water resources and property values.

The Bitterroot Water Forum also recently held a Realtor course titled "[Smart Building Near Streams in the Bitterroot](#)". Instructors included Tom Parker, a restoration ecologist, and Ran Pigman, a local builder. The training was very well received by Realtors, 45 attended (limited by bus space) and there was a waiting list. The focus was on conservation and restoration. Realtors know that land values are high for wildlife habitat and healthy streams and that the natural resources are an important part of the property and need to be preserved. Course discussed the geology and geomorphology so that Realtors could understand what make the stream healthy or what can hurt it. Guidelines for building we presented. The local builder focused that there is a need for lead time to get permits and discussed how valuable the volunteer expert service is to review the specifics of the land prior to considering development. The field trip component was especially well received by Realtors to view riparian areas and landforms. The field portion helped Realtors understand what was being talked about in the classroom, some had never made the connection about a floodplain and terraces. Observations included request for increased field time, request for having an annual training, more demonstration on looking at wetland and riparian maps, and more information on regulations, easements, local plant resources. Having a local builder as one of the instructors brought credibility to the workshop. The course included an information packet for Realtors.

Discussion included interest in replicating the Realtor course and team of volunteer technical experts in other locations. How to fund this outreach and ensure it is sustainable? The Bitterroot Water Forum and instructors offer the PP to others, so the material is already developed, need to substitute local pictures/examples. Realtors pay for credits for other courses, this is an option.

### **[Stream Mitigation Program for Department of Army Permits in Montana.](#)**

**Todd Tillinger**, Montana Regulatory Program Manager, US Army Corps of Engineers.

[DRAFT Stream Mitigation Process for Montana - February 24, 2005](#)

Presentation discussed the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) program for compensatory mitigation for 404 and Section 10 permits for unavoidable adverse impacts to Montana streams and rivers. Approximately 80% of regulated activities in Montana are for stream and river impacts. The other 20% are for wetlands and lakes. Wetlands already have

established COE compensatory mitigation requirements. The COE drafted the Stream Mitigation Program (SMP) guidelines in 2005 and posted on their website. They are currently aligning the draft SMP with the 2008 Mitigation Rule and the 2007 Nationwide Permits, and have the authority and obligation to implement this program already. The SMP in Montana may be operating as soon as October. COE will issue a Public Announcement, post on their website, and send to Lynda Saul to forward to the Wetland Council and Watershed listservs. Comments and suggestions will be accepted on an on-going basis, and any necessary changes will be made as time passes. The COE's basic mission is to balance utilization with protection.

Please view the PowerPoint to see a summary of the proposed Stream Mitigation protocols, including the proposed method for calculating impact debits, the riparian credit and stream restoration mitigation credits, and stream status for mitigation. In some cases, unavoidable adverse impacts to streams and rivers require compensatory mitigation under Department of Army regulatory authorities. The COE plans to allow up to 75% of the credit for riparian mitigation and at least 25% for in-channel stream restoration credit. The proposal is expected to require mitigation for projects that exceed some length. Compensatory Mitigation can be required for projects permitted under Individual or Nationwide Permits. The Montana SMP has an allowance for stream mitigation credit on projects without an easement, however consolidated mitigation options, involving both wetland and stream, must have a protective easement if wetland credit is sought. Other issues include the need for a viable In-Lieu Fee or similar program as a mitigation alternative for small impacts. The proposed SMP addresses concerns that impacts could occur on mainstem of streams and rivers while mitigation may more likely occur on tributaries. MDT watersheds will be used initially for mitigation boundaries. Application of the SMP will be adaptive. The COE has the ability to revise and determine a different way to obtain mitigation if needed. Due to the Special Area Management Plan, bank stabilization on the upper Yellowstone River is unique and there will be a separate mitigation plan for part of the Upper Yellowstone River corridor.

**Decision-Makers' Guide to Montana Water: Seeking Wetland Input. Gretchen Rupp, Director, Montana Water Center.**

The Montana Water Center was recently awarded a Renewable Resources grant through DNRC to develop and deliver a science-based, non-advocacy water curriculum for Montana local officials, called the *Decision-Makers' Guide to Montana Water*. The target audience is local governments such as county commissioners and city officials as well as planners and others at the local level. The project will last two years and develop a curriculum for live trainings and a web-based curriculum. The Decision-Makers Guide will likely include the following modules: surface water ground water interactions, water law, water quality impairment and protection, water quality data, and flood plain and riparian management.

The DEQ Wetland Program is entering into a contract with the Water Center to add a wetland module to the Decision-Makers Guide. Water Center asked for input from the Council regarding what kinds of information should be included in the wetland module. These suggestions were offered by Council participants: science based, use scientific definition, jurisdiction, subdivision and platting act and how this affects wetlands, functions and values, why wetlands are important, economic importance of wetlands, general overview of wetland types, links to wetland information, restoring natural capital (wetlands and

rivers provide economic services to communities beyond aesthetic and recreation), tools that are useful in identifying wetland plants, common wetland plants, water management, who's who in Montana wetlands, Montana landowners guide as a reference, irrigation component to wetlands. Please send additional wetland topic ideas to [water@montana.edu](mailto:water@montana.edu). The Water Center is just starting this project and will involve the Council in the future for feedback.

**Missoula County's Streamside Protection Program: Lessons Learned and Program Direction.** *Sarah Richey, Rural Landscape Scientist, Missoula County Rural Initiatives*

Missoula County Rural Initiatives program works to protect and enhance rural landscapes through land use planning and resource protection measures. They tried unsuccessfully to adopt a stream protection ordinance and shared observations about what worked and how they have refined their program based on lessons learned. Public meetings and listening sessions were dominated by strong opposition, despite recent resident surveys that showed that well over 90% of respondents support actions to maintain and improve water quality and to protect river and stream corridors for habitat and public safety. Take home messages from Missoula County's experience include: "tell me what the problem is", explain why existing regulations aren't enough, slow down and engage the citizens in the process, show solid science and technical information, and build a comprehensive program.

Current directions of the Missoula Council Streamside Protection program include: stream restoration; technical assistance/information, outreach and education, and other possibilities. They formed a Technical Advisory Committee 1½ years ago which meets regularly and includes 14 local individuals with backgrounds in an array of water related sciences. The presentation included details and outreach on a channel migration zone (CMZ) study of a 16 mile stretch of the Clark Fork River as an example of building citizen support and understanding for a comprehensive Stream Protection Program. Potential CMZ map applications include 1) outreach: buyer beware, education/awareness, irrigation infrastructure placement; 2) planning: land use planning, conservation planning restoration priorities; 3) incentive based program: BMP's conservation easements, sloughing easement program; 4) regulatory: no build zones, mitigation requirements, development standards. Missoula County has found that the strength and importance of CMZ maps for public outreach on stream protection cannot be overstated.

**Planning for Wetlands: Educational Workshops and Local Government Assistance on Methods to Protect Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Land Use Planning Decisions.** *Janet Ellis, Program Director, Montana Audubon*

This presentation provided an overview of products and tools developed for a DEQ Wetland Program contract with Montana Audubon. Numerous land use planning resources for local governments and others are on the Montana Audubon website

<http://www.mtaudubon.org/issues/wetlands/planning.html> Wetland and riparian related resources on the Montana Audubon website include:

- Planning Guide for Protecting Montana's Wetlands and Riparian Areas. The 2008 update includes addition of 7 new case studies from Montana local governments.
- The Need for Stream Vegetative Buffers: What Does the Science Say? This includes a web link to the scientific studies on recommendations for vegetated buffers to protect water quality, fish and aquatic habitat, and wildlife and wildlife habitat.

- Regulations Adopted by Montana Local Governments to protect wetlands and riparian areas.
- Public Health and Safety related to stream setbacks.
- Answers to frequently asked questions about stream setbacks.
- Pictures of Montana homes in jeopardy from flooding or river meandering.
- Field guide to common bank stabilization structures.

This presentation also discussed lessons learned from two Montana counties attempting to adopt stream protection measures in land use regulations, and the current regulations and policies adopted by Montana local governments to protect streams and wetlands. These may provide a good resource for others working on the local level on these issues.

### **Round Robin Updates**

**Tara Luna, Montana Natural Heritage Program.** Working on an NRCS funded grazing study on Blackfoot reservation, modifying behavior and drawing cattle away from wetlands and riparian areas with flavored supplements. Wet and riparian areas are rebounding well, seeing a difference. Recently received an EPA Wetland Program Development Grant to develop restoration guidelines for wetlands and riparian areas in the north-central region of Montana.

**Pete Husby, NRCS.** Tom Pick asked that he let us know they are forming a resource and implementation team. Composed of specialist looking for input and focus. Hope to have the team put together by January. Suggested that future Council meeting the NRCS State Conservation attend to present on this and NRCS wetland issues.

**Robert Ray, DEQ.** Call for 319 grant applications. \$900,000 will be available in June or July next year. Participates on Governors Task Force for Riparian Protection, will be doing 14 listening session across the state on streamside BMP, watch for it in your area. 319 outreach grant for riparian protection will be airing next spring, TV, radio, billboards watch for advertisements, theme has been selected and have consultant working on TV spot. Can be modified to suit local area's stream side management interest. 319 program looking to fund local volunteer water quality monitoring efforts and will fund up to \$2,000 for laboratory analyses, look to the DEQ web site.

**Debra Earl, Montana Water Course.** MWCC Meeting November 4<sup>th</sup>, Education and outreach, Riparian wetland area buffers in K thru 12 education and doing website and developing curriculum, working on Realtor education, will develop an online Realtor course them. Water rights training course last week for professionals. Over 70 attended and 30 on waiting list. Will be doing more of these training in the future. Have a volunteer monitoring certification program.

**Cat McIntyre, Montana Natural Heritage Program.** Longer term monitoring program on the Blackfoot Reservation. Completed 103 wetland rapid assessments this field season. Refined matrix they will use next summer. Observed things were changing, a lot of wetlands are drying up, encroachment in vegetation, creating a geodatabase, will be accessible by public. Embark on a project in the Lolo Forest where they are going to re-introduce the beaver. Are in the assessment phase right now.

**Karen Newlon, Montana Natural Heritage Program.** Reference wetlands ecological conditions, focused on east part of the state last summer and this summer the mountainous regions. This was a target assessment and represent a diverse group. Three tiered levels of assessment through the EPA process, using field indicators. Will complete the Field Guide to Wetland Ecological System in Montana in the spring. Plant communities in these systems. Mapping update, big chunk 40 quads in upper Clark Fork and listed more that have been approved and will be turned into NWI geo-database and on database. Working at distributing this data.

**Linda Vance, Montana Natural Heritage Program.** Recently received an EPA Wetland Program Development Grant to do an assessment of riparian areas along the major big rivers in Montana. Concern that the potential riparian area could be larger than they appear on the map. Riparian mapping only maps current condition, not riparian potential or health. Have project assessing riparian habitat in the upper Clark Fork. Working with spatial analyst to make a map that will better reflect the floodplain. Segment what shows up in polygons. Good provisional riparian maps. Condition, in a minimally disturbed area, what can we find in images to determine the best riparian areas and classify reaches as good, fair, and poor.

**Tom Hinz, Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership.** Reported that Jennifer Boyer, was recently selected to assist NRCS in delivering Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program projects on behalf of Ducks Unlimited, the Intermountain West Joint Venture, and Montana Wetlands Legacy Partners. The 2008 Farm Bill does allow grazing of WREP acres enrolled in long-term or perpetual easements under special provisions attached to Warranty Easement Deed. NRCS is currently working to develop grazing standards for these WREP pilot projects in cooperation with project partners. WREP project areas, according to national guidelines, may enroll wetlands and uplands at a 1:1 ratio. However, the NRCS State Conservationist can adjust this ratio if justified on the basis of water quality and other environmental benefits. For example, the Prairie Pothole Region of Montana, under the old WRP rules, allowed a 4:1 upland to wetland ratio. WREP contract value may be great enough to encourage producers to work with other partners and programs to get more of the property into a conservation easement like was done at the Bird Creek Ranch in Cascade County. The Bird Creek Ranch was recognized in May of this year with the Wetland Stewardship Award by DEQ and the Montana Wetland Council. For those wanting to learn more about potential WREP projects in their area, contact Jennifer Boyer at 539-3006.

**Dennis Lichtenberg, National Wetlands Research Center.** Wetland mapping 64 quads on CSKT, working with MTNHP to exchange QA/QC on mapped quads. Held a NWI workshop with 12 participants from 5 Tribes. Concerned about invasive knot weed and tamarisk.

**Clint Folden, CSKT.** Working under a grant working on reed canary grass. One wetland assessment left to finish first round of wetland assessments. Regional panel on response plan for the Flathead reservation on aquatic nuisance species.

**Charity Fechter, Madison County.** Working on the stream side committee and development growth committee. Encouraged people to look at Madison County website, [www.madison.mt.gov](http://www.madison.mt.gov). County is working on an ordinance for stream side protection. Have setbacks in subdivision regulations but subdivision regulations don't address existing subdivisions. Zoning is an approach which can offer water quality protection statutorily.

**Jeff Tiberi, MACD.** MCD Area meetings coming up with conservation districts and the MACD annual convention is in November. Conservation Districts have a way to get resolutions voted on, suggested similar process for other natural resource entities. He feels there is a lot more in common with the ranchers than we think. Talked about importance of education.

**Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon.** In 2008, MT Audubon petitioned MT Dept of Agriculture for Russian olive to be classified as noxious weed, new category. People will not have to eradicate but will not be allowed to sell. Cheat grass is also on this list. Dept. of Agriculture should have rules available for public comment in the fall 2009.

**Sunni Heikes-Knapton, Madison River Watershed Coordinator.** New position for Madison River. Working with MSU on after school program education materials.

**Jim Rokosch, Ravalli County Commissioner.** Desire to see more science integrated into the decision making process. Need for agency folks and non profits to not just develop the tools but also provide this information in a meaningful and concrete way to decision makers, planning departments and local officials. Demonstrate, show how tools can be used in that area. State MACo convention may be a good time to get information to these officials. Important to remember to keep it simple.

**Lynda Saul, DEQ.** Requested topic ideas for next Council meeting scheduled for January 19, 2010. Wetland hydrology was proposed. Please suggest other meeting ideas and speakers and plan to attend the Council meeting on January 19. Larry Handley, National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette Louisiana, has been invited to Helena to discuss wetland mapping on January 20, 2010.

**Wetland Council Meeting Adjourned**