



## 2016/2017 Annual Report

In 2016/2017 the Lake County Conservation District (LCCD) was served by five elected supervisors, two appointed supervisors, three associate supervisors, one full-time Conservation Coordinator, an Education & Outreach Specialist, and one Big Sky Watershed Americorps Member (BSWC). 2016/2017 was a transitional year for the LCCD Board of Directors. One seasoned associate supervisor retired, we gained a new associate supervisor and one supervisor stepped down to an associate supervisor while another stepped up to become a supervisor. LCCD would like to acknowledge former associate supervisor Toni Burton for 10 years of dedicated service. We also welcome Lita Fonda onto the board as an associate supervisor and thank Jack Sutphin for 7 years as a supervisor and his continued service as an associate supervisor. Finally LCCD would like to recognize Carlos Rodriques for serving as the newest supervisor.

Name	Title	Years of Service
Jim Simpson	Chairman and Urban Supervisor	12
Sigurd Jensen	Vice Chair and Supervisor	16
Susan Gardner	Supervisor	21
Zoe Lilja	Supervisor	11
Curt Rosman	Supervisor	11
Carlos Rodriques	Supervisor	9
Mark McGuyer	Urban Supervisor	2
Jack Sutphin	Associate Supervisor	7
David Sturman	Associate Supervisor	3
Lita Fonda	Associate Supervisor	1
Heidi Fleury	Conservation Coordinator	1
Ben Montgomery	NRCS Ronan	7
Kristi D'Agati	Education/Outreach Specialist	1
Karli Becher	Big Sky Watershed Corps Member	<1

## Lake County Conservation District and Ronan NRCS Partnership

Each year the Lake County Conservation District (LCCD) and the Ronan Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partner to host local conservation education workshops, conservation outreach initiatives and Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) Area V events. This helps meet our goal of reaching all members of our conservation district as well as the larger Western Montana agricultural community. The events cover many important conservation issues including pasture and crop management, pollinator education and youth conservation stewardship. Our 2016/2017 schedule was full with a total of 14 outreach events and 2 community conservation education initiatives. The events and presentations drew over 650 Lake County residents while the larger regional event and bus tour drew an additional 250 producers from around the state, and our new Pollinator Initiative reached 350 Lake County residents. In total, LCCD staff and supervisors along with NRCS **outreached to 1,255 people in 2016/2017.**

Date	Outreach Event	Attendance
July 2016	Pasture Walk—Niemeyer’s, Ronan, MT	30
July 2016	Pasture Walk—Foust Farm, Moise, MT	35
September 2016	Pivotal Pasturing Tour Bus—La Cense Ranch, Dillon, MT	90
November 2016	Soil Health Workshop—Jim Gerrish, Missoula, MT	80
February 2017	Winter Grazing Seminar—Double Tree, Missoula, MT	185
April 2017	River Stewardship Workshop, Swan Valley, MT	30
April 2017	Annie’s Project—MSU Extension Presentation, Polson, MT	15
April 2017	Lake County Youth Pollinator School Outreach, ALL OVER	210
April 2017	Northwest Montana Beekeepers Association Pollinator Presentation, Polson, MT	15
May 2017	Rotary Luncheon Pollinator Presentation, Polson, MT	25
May 2017	4th Grade Days—Polson Fair Grounds, Polson, MT	350
May 2017	Watershed Visualization Project Classroom Day, Polson, MT	30
June 2017	Kiwanis Luncheon Pollinator Presentation, Polson, MT	10
Spring 2017	Lake County Pollinator Seed Mix Outreach, ALL OVER	100
July 2017	Pasture Walks—Shady Maple Farms, St. Ignatius	20
July 2017	Pasture Walk—Niemeyer’s, Ronan, MT	30
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1255</b>

## 2016/2017 Pasture Walks—Lake County

These annual events give community members a chance to tour local conservation-minded agricultural operations that are working in partnership with NRCS to implement new management practices. These events continually draw between 20 and 30 people and remain a great venue for Lake County residents to mingle and share ideas.



## September 2016: Pivotal Pasturing Tour Bus—Dillon, MT

In September, LCCD and NRCS hosted a bus tour to La Cense Ranch in Dillon, MT. This event gave participants an opportunity to see simple, common sense grazing practices that have been



implemented at the La Cense Ranch for over a decade. The group was able to see several rotations of livestock during the tour. There were close to 90 people in attendance.

### **February 2017: Western Montana Grazing & Agriculture Conference**

In February 2017, LCCD and NRCS - along with financial support from Area V Conservation Districts, Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) and local business and organization donations - hosted the Western Montana Grazing & Agriculture Conference in Missoula, MT. Despite the bad weather this first annual event was well attended by 185 people.



### **April 2017: River Stewardship Workshop—Lake County**

In April, LCCD - in partnership with the Lake County Commissioners and Park Board, Flathead Conservation District, SWCDM, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) as well as the Swan and Flathead Lakers - hosted a River Stewardship Workshop. The day started out with presentations about river stewardship, riparian zones, and restoration techniques. In the afternoon, participants did a mini restoration planting along the Swan River. Thirty community members attended the event. Financial assistance was provided through a DNRC education mini-grant as well as a grant from the Montana Native Plant Society assisting with plant costs.



## May 2017: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Ag Days—Lake County

Our yearly 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Ag Days event was a success with 350 youth from Lake County passing through 13 informational and educational stations. Some stations included soil health, small grains, along with the first outing of the Augmented Reality Sandbox.



## Lake County Forage Improvement Study

The Lake County Forage Improvement Study began in 2015 and will be monitored yearly for 5 years. The primary focus of this study is to find easy, affordable ways to improve pasture quality as well as wildlife and pollinator habitat in Lake County. The project is being funded by grants from the Montana Department of Agriculture: Growth Through Agriculture Program, Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). These funds have helped purchase seed, implement plantings and pay for a Big Sky Watershed Corps member, Kristi D’Agati, who was in charge of installing study plantings and creating a simple monitoring design in 2016. Year two of monitoring was completed in June of 2017.

	<b>Study</b>	<b># of Ranches or Scale of Study</b>	<b>Acres</b>
	Legume Interseeding Studies	7	22
	Forage Kochia	5	19
	Dry Pasture Improvement Study	1	40
	Wildlife Habitat Interseeding Study	1	4
	Corn Interseeding Study	1	5.5
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>5 Studies</b>	<b>14 Ranches</b>	<b>90.5 Acres</b>

## Lake County Conservation District—2017 Big Sky Watershed Corps

In 2017, Lake County Conservation District, with financial assistance from SWCDM, hosted its second Big Sky Watershed Americorps Member, Karli Becher. Karli will be with us through November 2017 and has already contributed immensely to our outreach and monitoring efforts as well as the creation of our new watershed education outreach tool, the SENSE-Sational Sandbox.



## Lake County Conservation District Education and Outreach Specialist

In 2016/2017, LCCD secured funding from DNRC and SWCDM to employ Kristi D'Agati, our 2015/2016 BSWC member, for an additional 21 weeks. The temporary position allowed LCCD to increase our capacity and launch two new community outreach programs. The Lake County Pollinator Initiative and the Lake County Watershed Visualization Project.



## Lake County Pollinator Initiative

In September 2016 LCCD Supervisor Susan Gardner, with support from the entire board, introduced a Pollinator Resolution to MACD at the Area V Annual Meeting. That resolution went on to be adopted by MACD at the Annual Meeting in November on a statewide basis. The resolution defines objectives for LCCD as well as other Conservation Districts and MACD work plans. See resolution below:

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that NACD and MACD continue their support of pollinator projects, providing;*

*--educational and outreach materials with specific emphasis on the relationship between pollinators and agriculture;*

*--Funding for habitat establishment and restoration;*

*--Development of ideas and templates for pollinator projects;*

*THAT Collaboration with other agencies and organizations further develop local and regional plans for pollinator habitat enhancement; and*

*THAT individual Conservation Districts include pollinator projects in annual goal setting.*

LCCD began the Pollinator Initiative in Spring 2017. It includes community outreach, a free Lake County Pollinator Seed Mix and free site prep technical assistance to ensure planting success. LCCD has distributed the custom seed mix for 100 plots so far. We also focused on pollinator awareness outreach, school presentations and plantings and participation in CSKT's Bird and Bear Day. Presentations were also made at Polson Rotary and Polson Kiwanis luncheons and the Northwest Montana Beekeepers Society monthly meeting. Altogether LCCD staff has interacted with **350 Lake County residents** regarding pollinator plantings and general education and provided seed for **4.7 new acres of pollinator habitat.**



## Lake County 2017 Spring Pollinator Initiative

<b>Private Landowner Plots:</b>			
<b>Size:</b>	<b># of Plots:</b>	<b>Area (ft<sup>2</sup>):</b>	
2,500 ft <sup>2</sup> :	67	167500	
2,000ft <sup>2</sup> :	6	12000	
1,500 ft <sup>2</sup> :	5	7500	
1,000ft <sup>2</sup> :	7	7000	
500 ft <sup>2</sup> :	15	7500	Total # of acres:
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>	201500	4.6

<b>School Participation:</b>		
<b>School:</b>	<b># of Students:</b>	<b>Seed Given:</b>
<b>Pablo Elementary School (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)</b>	140	1500 ft <sup>2</sup> 1000 ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Arlee Middle School</b>	30	500 ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Arlee Head Start</b>	20	100 ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Ronan Middle School</b>	20	1000 ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total:</b>	210	4100 ft <sup>2</sup>





## The Lake County Watershed Visualization Project—SENSE-Sational Sandbox

Original inspiration and interest in creating the Augmented Reality Sandbox came from Supervisors Carlos Rodriques and Zoe Lilja. LCCD's past and current Big Sky Watershed Corps Members, Kristi D'Agati and Karli Becher, then spearheaded construction and we received financial assistance through a 319 Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana (SWCDM) mini-grant and technical assistance from Chauncey Means and Chuck Sanger with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). Without these people, building the SENSE-Sational Sandbox would not have been possible.



The SENSE-Sandbox uses a short throw projector, a 3D camera, and free computer software developed at UC Davis to project topographic lines on the sand. This educational tool is being used to teach students about watersheds and other natural resource topics. The sandbox was first used at 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Ag Days at the beginning of May and then was brought to the Linderman Elementary School at the end of May and was used with a total of **380 local 4<sup>th</sup> graders**. LCCD plans to bring the sandbox to more schools in Lake County throughout the coming school year.

The Lake County Conservation Board of Supervisors and Staff would like to thank our main partners for their continued technical and financial support!

