Welcome to the 2017 Western Montana Grazing & Agriculture Conference on February 9 & 10 in Missoula. Brought to you by Lake County Conservation District | NRCS.
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

8:00  Registration  Pastries and coffee sponsored by Area V Conservation Districts

9:00  KEYNOTE: “I don’t need no stinking grazing system” Rick Caquelin, NRCS Grazing Specialist and Rancher, Great Falls, MT

10:00  Break - Sponsored by Montana Farmers Union

10:15  Concurrent Panel Sessions with resource professionals and western Montana producers

Agronomic Transitions: Jumping off a cliff or dipping your toes: How to manage risk while employing change

Management Strategies for Smaller Scale Diversified Operations

12:00  Lunch - Sponsored by the Montana Audubon Society and the Long Billed Curlew

1:00  Concurrent Speaker Sessions

Bitterroot: Beth Robinette, Roots of Resilience, Part 1: Planned Grazing - Putting together a management plan

Lewis/Clark: Josh Schrecengost: Maximizing Habitat for Ground Nesting Birds

Russell: Phillip Davis: Precision Ag Trends and Research in Montana: A look to the Future

2:00  Concurrent Speaker Sessions

Bitterroot: Roots of Resilience Part 2: Furthering the management plan

Lewis/Clark: Marlon Winger: How do I tell if my soil is healthy?

Russell: Mark Schiltz & Pelah Hoyt: The Benefits of Conservation Easements on Working Agricultural Lands

3-4:30  Panel Session: Integrating Diverse Forage and Cover Crops into Western Montana Agriculture

5:30-8  Social Hour and Famous Dave’s BBQ at the Northside Kettlehouse Brewery
313 N. 1st St. W Missoula, MT
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

8:00  Light Breakfast *Pastries and coffee sponsored by J & J Manufacturing, Ovando MT*

9:00  **KEYNOTE:** “Building Resilience from the Soil Up” Jay Fuhrer, NRCS Soil Health guru, Bismarck, ND

10:30  Break - **Sponsored by RDO Equipment**

11:00  **Concurrent Speaker Sessions** with resource professionals and western Montana producers

   **Russell:** **Dave Scott:** Grazing Taller Grass: A Case Study from Montana
   **Lewis/Clark:** **Dr. Zack Miller:** Diversified Ag Products and Markets for Western Montana
   **Bitterroot:** **Jay Fuhrer:** Soil Health Perspectives

12:00  Lunch Provided by DoubleTree Missoula **sponsored by Westland Seed, Ronan MT**

1:00  **Concurrent Speaker Sessions**

   **Bitterroot:** **Dr. Kay Hajek:** Using grazing to manage wetland and riparian habitat
   **Russell:** **Rick Caquelin:** You Have Control: Taking Control of the Herd
   **Lewis/Clark:** **Ben Montgomery and Austin Allen, NRCS Ronan:** Weed eat it!—How improved grazing management fits into your Integrated Pest Management Plan

2:00  **Concurrent Speaker Sessions**

   **Lewis/Clark:** **Ben Montgomery NRCS and Kristi D’Agati, Lake County CD:** Renovating pastures: Seeding and interseeding for forage improvement
   **Russell:** **Josh Schrecengost:** Managing human/wildlife conflicts on agricultural lands in Montana.
   **Bitterroot:** **Dr. Clain Jones:** Interpreting soil tests for practical application

3:00  **Closing Remarks**
RICK CAQUELIN

NRCS Grazing Specialist and Rancher Great Falls, MT

Rick Caquelin is currently the NRCS Area Range Specialist in north central MT. He has worked for the NRCS for a significant amount of time (a polite way of saying that he is gray and balding), and his duty stations have included Culbertson, Baker and Stanford. He has spent a large part of his career assisting producers with improving grazing management and doing rangeland monitoring to benefit grazingland, animals and producers. He resides in Stanford, Montana and when not working for the NRCS he spends his time with his wife managing his own ranch, a cow/calf operation where he focuses heavily on grazing into the dormant season and improving rangeland health through grazing management. Any spare time he has is spent with his wife, kids and cows.

JAY FUHRER

NRCS Soil Health Specialist Bismarck, ND

Jay Fuhrer is a Conservationist employed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Bismarck, North Dakota. Growing up on a small grain and livestock farm, Jay’s interests have always centered on agriculture. Jay emphasizes Soil Health as a foundation for cropping systems, grazing systems, livestock integration, and cover crops when working with producers. Summers are spent at the Menoken Farm, hosting tour groups and applying Soil Health principles. Jay’s interest in soil health has resulted in numerous speaking engagements within the US and also includes Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Russia, and South Africa.
SPEAKERS

BETH ROBINETTE  Grazing Management Specialist
Beth Robinette is the fourth generation on the family ranch. She graduated from Fairhaven College at Western Washington University where she earned a self-designed degree entitled “Empowering Family Farms: Profiting from Sustainability.” She recently completed her MBA program in Sustainable Systems at Bainbridge Graduate Institute with a certificate in Sustainable Food and Agriculture. Beth was raised with Holistic Management and is an active partner on the ranch. She is very involved in promoting holistic and sustainable agriculture practices.

JOSH SCHRECENGOST  NRCS Area Biologist, Great Falls
Josh holds a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Penn State University and a Master’s Degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management from the University of Georgia. He began his career conducting research on predator-prey interactions focusing primarily on white-tailed deer and coyotes. Over the last 8 years his focus has shifted to blending wildlife habitat management practices into agricultural working lands. He was raised on a farm in western Pennsylvania and currently resides with his wife, two daughters, and two bird dogs in Cascade, MT.

PHILIP DAVIS  MSU & UM Researcher
Philip works as a Project Manager and GIS Analyst at Montana State University on a Precision Agriculture Research Study. He is responsible for organizing and supervising field operations and is the conduit for farmer-researcher communication. Philip worked as a Consultant and GIS Specialist from 2011 to 2015 where he was involved in various projects including habitat assessments, wetland and upland restoration projects, and weed mapping and management plan development for private citizens, as well as local, state, and federal entities.

MARLON WINGER  NRCS Regional Soil Health Specialist
Marlon earned a MS and BS degree at Utah State University in Plant Science. He grew up on a family owned dairy farm in Dayton Idaho, where he found is passion for Agriculture. He worked as a County Agricultural Agent for Utah State University Extension service for 9 years in Price, Utah. He has been working for the USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for 10 years, as Area agronomist and State Agronomist in Idaho, currently works as the Regional Soil Health Specialist for MT, WY, and Idaho.
PELAH HOYT  Five Valleys Land Trust
Pelah directs Five Valleys Land Trust’s lands program and works with landowners and partners to reach shared conservation goals. Since she came to Five Valleys in 2005 she has worked in many aspects of voluntary private land conservation and stewardship. Her background includes two years working with conservation-minded landowners in Ecuador as a Peace Corps Volunteer. She holds a Master’s degree in Resource Conservation from the University of Montana. Pelah grew up in the Jocko Valley and currently lives in Missoula.

MARK SCHILTZ  Montana Land Reliance
As western manager for MLR, Mark coordinates all aspects of private land conservation including project development, stewardship, and education and outreach. After working in Alaska, Nevada, and Central and South America as a placer gold exploration geologist, he returned to Bigfork in 1990 to manage his family’s farm. He believes there is no more honorable or noble profession than working on the land. After protecting his family’s 100 year old farm with a conservation easement, he figures the next best thing is to help others do the same with MLR.

DAVE SCOTT  Livestock Specialist & Rancher, NCAT
Dave Scott graduated with a B.S. in Dairy Production from Washington State University. After working for five years as a dairy herdsman, Dave, and his wife Jenny, milked 50 Jersey and Guernsey cows on intensively grazed pasture in Montana for 21 years. In 2003, they switched to grazing 200 ewes and their lambs on the same 30 irrigated acres. For the past five years, Dave and Jenny have concentrated on reducing commercial fertilization inputs and controlling internal parasites through innovative grazing strategies.

DR. ZACH MILLER  Western Agriculture Research Center, MSU
Zach is interested in understanding the impacts and feedbacks between plant herbivores/pathogens and plant populations and communities and applying these insights to improve the productivity and sustainability of agricultural production systems. His research focuses on the ecology and biology of weeds and diseases and how pests and their impacts can be altered by management practices in a variety of agroecosystems.
BEN MONTGOMERY NRCS Ronan
Ben Montgomery is currently the District Conservationist at the Ronan Field Office. He holds a B.S. from Montana State University in Bozeman and an M.S. in Soil and Water Conservation from the University of Wisconsin. Ben has worked for the NRCS in Idaho, as well as Malta, MT before settling with his family in the Ronan area. He has taken a strong interest in improving pasture management and enjoys sharing and learning with the local community via numerous outreach events and individual ranch planning projects.

DR. KAY HAJEK Postdoctoral Associate, UM
Kay Hajek is a postdoctoral associate working in John Maron’s lab at the University of Montana. Kay holds a Ph.D. in ecology from the State University of New York and a B.S. in biology from Xavier University. Kay began her career in wildlife and natural areas management of Delaware’s State Parks, and conducted her graduate research on small family farms in central New York. Her work focused on evaluating livestock grazing as a tool in the management of wetland plant and animal communities.

AUSTIN ALLEN NRCS Ronan
Austin graduated from MSU in 2007 with a degree in Soil & Water Sciences. Upon graduating, his work in soil and holistic management carried him to Mongolia where he worked with indigenous herders. He also worked in the Gallatin Valley with a seed potato farm for six years, doing everything from irrigation to mechanics. Prior to coming to NRCS, he was an agronomist in the Mission Valley working with farmers, ranchers and land owners on soil fertility, crop and pasture advising, and pest management.

KRISTI D’AGATI Lake County Conservation District
Kristi D’Agati is currently the Education and Outreach Specialist for the Lake County Conservation District. She holds a B.S. in environmental science and soil science from the University of Vermont. Previously Kristi was a Big Sky Watershed Corps member working with the LCCD and the Ronan NRCS office on the Lake County Forage Improvement Study. This set of on-farm field trials evaluated a variety of different planting and disturbance methods, and legume and grass species.
Management Strategies For Small Scale Diversified Operations

TRAVIS LEMKE NRCS Soil Conservationist, Missoula
Travis Lemke graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fisheries Resource Management from the University of Idaho in May of 2000. He has worked for the US Forest Service in Idaho, and for NRCS Montana in Chinook, Lewistown, and now Missoula. Over the last four years Travis has been actively engaged in promoting soil health principles by providing technical assistance, education, and assisting agricultural producers with the implementation of practices aimed at improving conservation and conserving natural resources.

DAVID STURMAN Shady Maple Farm, St. Ignatius, MT
David Sturman came to farming ten years ago, after careers as a farrier and horselogger. He and his family operate Shady Maple Farm in the Mission Valley, a small, diversified livestock operation. David practices mob grazing with his lowline cattle and Katahdin hair sheep, and direct markets his products. His goal is to use as little internal combustion energy as possible to produce as much food as possible, while improving the condition of his land.

JULIAN CUNNINGHAM Flathead Valley Community College
Julian Cunningham has worked as farm manager for Flathead Valley Community College’s (FVCC) Agriculture Program since 2013. His duties include teaching and directing food production for markets within the college such as the Eagle’s Nest Cafe, the Culinary Arts Program, and Student / Staff CSA. Prior to his employment with FVCC, Julian ran his own farm in the Flathead Valley marketing produce through a CSA which served about 150 families for 16 years.

ANDREW MALUCELLI NRCS Soil Conservationist Ronan, MT and Dancing Boy Farm, Arlee, MT
As a soil conservationist, Andrew has assisted dozens of diversified farming operations in the region in reaching their conservation goals, expanding production, and increasing resiliency. He is an “Organic Champion”, and provides training and assistance to fellow NRCS’ers about organic agriculture. In 2010, he and his wife started Dancing Boy Farm on, which sells organic produce wholesale through the Western Montana Growers Cooperative.
PANELISTS
Agronomic Transitions: How To Manage Risk While Employing Change

JODI & SCOTT BUXBAUM Crow Creek Ranch, Charlo, MT
Jodie and Scott both have backgrounds in agriculture & animal sciences. Scott and Jodie have lived in Ronan, MT for 15 years, where they farm small grains and raise commercial cattle. They graze their cattle in Lake county on native rangeland, improved dryland pasture, and irrigated pasture. For the past two years Scott and Jodie have been working to adopt moderate intensity rotational grazing on their ranch. The overall goal of the ranch is to improve soil health, increase forage quality, and maintain good animal performance.

DAVID MANNIX Mannix Bros Ranch, Helmville, MT
David Mannix is an active member of the Mannix Bros Ranch in Helmville, Montana. The home ranch has been in their family since 1882 and currently includes over 50,000 acres of both leased and deeded acres. Over time, areas of their range has witnessed over grazing, under grazing and noxious weed infestations, however the ranch continues to refine and improve its management. Historical and present management has included season long use, deferred rotation, rest rotation and intensive grazing.

BART MORRIS Oxbow Cattle Company, Missoula, MT
Bart and Wendy moved to Missoula in the summer of 2006, and feel lucky to call it home. Bart grew up working on local ranches in the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming, and Wendy was raised on the Tenny Ranch in northeastern Colorado; cattle and the ranching lifestyle is deeply en-grained in their roots. They met at the University of Wyoming during undergraduate school and married soon thereafter. In 2014, Bart and Wendy fulfilled a life-long dream and started Oxbow Cattle Company.
TOM HEGGELUND  Heggelund Ranch, Deerlodge
Heggelund Ranch is a family operation in the Deerlodge Valley of Montana. Their operation is as simple as they can make it, with a wide diversity in both plants and animals. Soil health is the basis of everything the Heggelund family does from planting cover crops to moving animals 1 to 3 times daily in the growing season. Through observations they have made, the closer they stay in-sync with nature the better things work on many levels. Animals are good at doing their work and they believe in allowing them to express themselves in our environment.

ARNOLD FOUST  Foust Farms, Moiese
Arnold Foust along with his father, Everitt Foust own and operate Foust Farms in Moiese, Montana. They grow corn, hay, small grains and pasture and run a cow/calf operation. The Fousts’ are strong believers in managing their operation sustainably to maximize wildlife values, healthy soils and clean water. Recently they have sought out and attended numerous courses to increase their knowledge of sustainable farming and ranching. They have begun experimenting with cover crops to increase their ability to feed both the soil and their livestock herd.
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