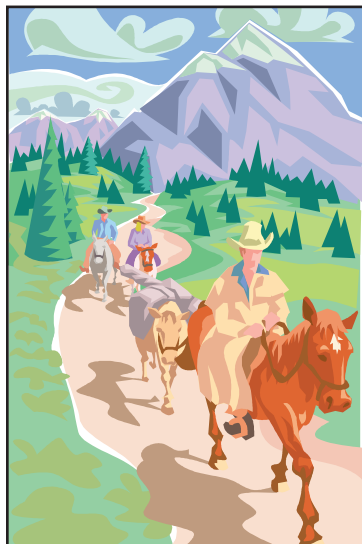


Ranchlands Quest

Working collaboratively to enhance production agriculture, open space, resource stewardship, wildlife, and habitat management.



RANGE RIDERS RIDE AGAIN

This is the seventh year of the Range Rider program in the Madison Valley. In the summer of 2004 the program began through a collaborative effort of US Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana FWP, Predator Conservation Alliance, Turner Endangered Species Fund, and Madison Valley Ranchlands Group. We received a \$30,000 grant from the McCaw Foundation and an \$8,000 grant from the Arthur B. Schultz Foundation to fund the effort. That money lasted a couple of years. Since then funding has come from a variety of sources and the collaborative effort has narrowed somewhat. Madison Valley Ranchlands Group continues to manage the program; hiring the Range Riders and coordinating their efforts on a day to day basis. Montana FWP manages the wolves as a wildlife species for the state of Montana. Predator Conservation Alliance transformed into an organization called Keystone Conservation and helped raise part of the funding. Wildlife Services still manages lethal control of wolves in the event of livestock depredation. The past two years the majority of the funding has come through the Madison Conservation District in the form of a HB 223 grant. The Cinnabar Foundation has also provided funding to support the program.

Range Rider programs have been replicated in several areas of the Rocky Mountain region. There have been numerous magazine and newspaper articles written and also some videos made to promote the efforts taken here.

Jim and Marilyn Powers will be employed for their sixth year as Range Riders this year. In the past they have headquartered in the Antelope Basin area and worked in that basin and the Elk Lake area. They have also responded to wolf problems on Wall Creek, the Sun Ranch, and in the Squaw Creek and Papoose Creek grazing allotments. This year they will also be helping in the Centennial Valley and West Fork of the Madison.

...continued on page 4



IN THIS ISSUE

Subject	Page
Streamside Protection	2
Private Property Rights	3
Sustainability	4
Energy Freedom	5
Weed Committee Notes, etc.	6-8
Bear Creek Days	9
Sage Grouse	10
Sun Ranch Change	11
Note from President	Back Cover

Streamside Protection

The original process of considering streamside protection began in earnest in the late 1970's with the appointment of a Madison River Committee. That committee opined in 1979 the importance of "preserving scenic values and maintaining high quality recreational opportunities on the Madison River corridor for present and future generations." A Madison River Corridor study was begun in 1983 and further documented the public's "concern that development along the Madison River will adversely affect the important economic and recreational opportunities that so many people depend on in the valley" and "immediate action is needed to protect the Madison River Corridor with special emphasis on a strip 500 feet each side of the river." This study concluded with the 1993 action by the Madison County Board of Commissioners adopting streamside protection standards restricting development for newly subdivided property along the Madison River. In 1999 the Madison County Board of Commissioners adopted a Comprehensive Plan which included the guiding principles of "protect our river corridors" and "respect private property rights."

In 2000 the Madison Board of Commissioners extended streamside protection to include all newly subdivided property along all waterways in Madison County. In 2006, the County Comprehensive Plan was updated and adopted as the Madison County Growth Policy. A year later the Madison Board of County Commissioners adopted the Madison Valley Growth Management Action Plan which identified actions to be implemented to manage growth in the Madison Valley. One such action was to use building setbacks to protect streams and rivers including land not subject to subdivision review.

In 2008, the Madison Board of Commissioners appointed a Streamside Protection Steering Committee to craft a

proposed ordinance for streamside protection. Their charge was to balance the protection of our river and stream corridors with respect for private property rights. That charge resulted in a year and a half of meetings in trying to find an acceptable balance.

What does it mean to protect our river corridors? Protect them from what? Part of a river corridor is the land upon which the river moves. That land, up to the high water mark on each side belongs to the State of Montana. The water in the river belongs to all the citizens of the State. Rivers and streams, over time, migrate and cause legal questions about ownership boundaries. The health of rivers depends in part on their ability to migrate. Since the water belongs to us as citizens we need to insure that it can move appropriately for the health of the river.

The fish and wildlife associated with a river corridor also belong to all the citizens of the State. The future of Montana's wildlife depends on the thoughtful planning and protection of vegetated buffers along our streams. Streamside areas only represent a small part of our state—less than 4%. Yet more than half of our state's wildlife use these areas for food; protected access to water; cover; resting areas during migration; travel routes; relief from hot dry summer or cold snowy winters; and breeding areas. Consequently, Scientific studies recommend that, in order to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat, 300-foot stream vegetated buffers be maintained. Certain wildlife species need a larger vegetated buffer.

Given this basic information it would seem critical that we strive to maximize the protection of our river corridor. Why would we try to minimize the width of the protected areas associated with such a critical component of our landscape? This reminds me of a story from the old west. On one particular stretch of road that stagecoaches used, there was a very narrow portion around a rocky precipice

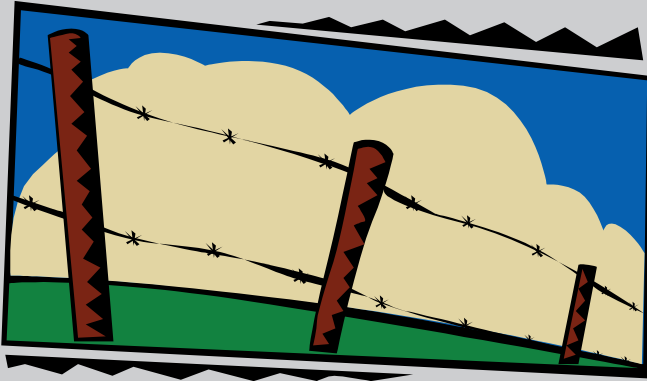


with a big drop off. In interviewing potential stagecoach drivers they were asked how close they could safely drive near the edge of the road. Some always boasted of how close they could get to the edge without blinking an eye. The candidate who would be selected was always the one who responded, I drive as far away from the edge as I possibly can. He was not only concerned about his own safety but the safety of the passengers, the coach and the horses. It seems a good premise for determining how much protection we should give to our rivers and streams for water quality issues, wildlife and fish habitat and safety, recreation and tourism needs and the future health of all aspects of our valley and community.

The second portion of the Guiding Principles of the Comprehensive Plan is to respect private property rights. Do any regulations respect private property rights? If there were no regulations or laws in our society would we have greater private property rights? Without rules and regulations what insures that we can even keep our private property? For an orderly society and the smooth functioning of our commerce and personal lives, we are dependent upon some assurance of equity and fairness. That can only happen when there are universally accepted and supported rules of interaction. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights were crafted to insure our liberty and free pursuit of happiness. Our Founding Fathers wisely provided a means of establishing regulations to insure that no one individual's rights could impinge upon the rights of another or every one. The environment

...continued on page 3

Private Property Rights



Streamside Protection
...continued from page 2

of the Madison Valley provides great value to the lives of all who live here and also those who pass through. Should the 'rights' of one or a few individuals be allowed at the expense or loss of 'rights' of not only the balance of society but also the 'rights' of the ecological biodiversity? What one person may want today for their own piece of property will be different from the wants of the next owner of that property. We should keep in mind that the valley will last much longer than you and I will. We are here but for a moment compared to the endurance of the valley.

We can have a win-win situation with streamside protection. We can provide adequate protection for the functioning of our streams and their related biological systems. We should maximize that protection for the sake of ourselves and future generations. We can provide adequate respect for private property rights through a variance process for individual parcels which utilizes the best science that can be found to insure we don't degrade or impair those broad interactions of all species of flora and fauna that make this a unique place to enjoy and celebrate. Only as we strive to implement solutions that are broad in vision and that look to the future well being of all citizens and biological functions of the valley will we stand our tallest as citizens of a great land and society.

Many aspects of the proposed Streamside Protection Ordinance that the Steering Committee prepared are to be applauded. It was a long arduous process. Part of the Steering Committee was committed to protecting our river corridors. Part of the Steering Committee was committed to protecting private property rights. The charge to the Steering Committee was to respect private property rights but to protect our river corridors. Sacrificing the biological and functional needs of the river corridor in no way respects private property rights.

What private property rights do we have as citizens of Montana? According to the Montana Constitution, article 2, section 3, we have inalienable rights. It says, "All persons are born free and have certain inalienable rights. They include the right to a clean and healthful environment and the rights of pursuing life's basic necessities, enjoying and defending their lives and liberties, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and seeking their safety, health and happiness in all lawful ways. In enjoying these rights, all persons recognize corresponding responsibilities."

The right to a clean and healthful environment means that others are not free to degrade or pollute in a manner that takes away that right. We have the right to acquire, possess and protect our property. It does not say we have other rights connected or guaranteed through property ownership. Many overlook the last sentence of this section which states that we have corresponding responsibilities that accompany the rights provided by this Constitution. We cannot exercise our rights in a way that is a nuisance or harmful to others.

There is no language in the Constitution that states or implies that we have certain rights regarding what we can do with our private property. The use of our property has to be lawful and in no way interfere with the inalienable rights of all other citizens. The basis of all laws and regulations is to promote and protect the rights of all citizens so that the inalienable rights provided are not infringed upon. When individuals seek to exercise personal rights not given by the constitution, the environment and society ultimately suffer.

Article 9, section 1 of the Constitution addressed this need and responsibility. It states, "The State and each person shall maintain and improve a clean and healthful environment in Montana for present and future generations. The legislature shall provide for the administration and enforcement of this duty. The legislature shall provide adequate remedies for the protection of the environmental life support system from degradation and provide adequate remedies to prevent unreasonable depletion and degradation of natural resources."

These two articles of our state constitution are about the amenities that make this a wonderful state and how we can maintain those amenities for future generations. It has never been about who could build the biggest house closest to the river at the expense of ecological systems, the environment and future generations who are entitled to the same amenities we are. The right to degrade and deplete is not, and has never been a private property right.



Moving Towards Sustainability

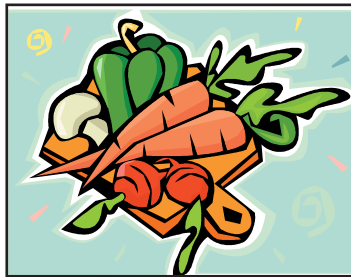
Buy local, sustainable communities, safe food, better health, carbon footprint!

These are all buzzwords in our current society and political rhetoric. They are not new topics. They are actually a return to how things were done in by gone years. There are Farmer's Markets popping up all over the nation and having wonderful success. Restaurants are including locally grown produce and meats on their menus. People are keenly aware of having safe food, food that they know where it came from and what is in it.



The Madison Valley is not being left behind in this renewal. Madison Farm 2 Fork has made great strides in helping raise awareness and create excitement about self reliance. The geo-thermally heated greenhouses are on track for construction this summer and operation next fall. The Ennis schools are planning curriculum that

would help students learn the art and value of raising food. Those foods will also be utilized in the school lunchroom. A school greenhouse will provide learning experiences in developing skills that will benefit students throughout their lives.



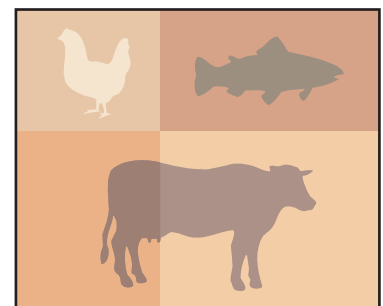
If half of the families who live in the Madison Valley had a garden which provided significantly for their own food budget and also contributed to a local market, what would it do for the economy of the community? What would our youth learn from raising, consuming and marketing local produce? If folks could reduce their monthly food expenses and improve their personal health, what a great benefit that would be the whole community.

The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group promotes sustainable ranching in the valley. Many of the values identified by folks who live in the valley are related to the amenities which ranching provides. Those amenities are open space, wildlife, clean air and water, and a small town atmosphere which promotes neighborli-

Range Riders Ride Again ...continued from page 1

2007 was the first year of livestock depredation in Antelope Basin after the Range Rider program was initiated. There were significant livestock losses to wolves prior to 2004. In 2007, a calf was killed by wolves the last day that the Range Riders were in the Basin. There was no lethal action taken with the wolves that year. In 2008, there were two calves killed and subsequently two wolves were killed by Wildlife Services in a lethal control action. In 2009, there was one calf killed and two calves severely injured which resulted in three wolves being killed by lethal control. Wolf numbers continue to increase in numbers throughout western Montana. Livestock numbers in Antelope Basin have actually decreased over the past seven years. The Range Rider program is viewed as a very successful collaborative effort in a contentious issue. The goal is to minimize livestock losses from wolf depredation by providing a consistent human presence and decreasing opportunities for wolves to get into the livestock.

ness. Farms and ranches of the past raised and consumed a major portion of their food. It is time that we found ways to return to many of those practices and relationships in our communities. Are we willing to purchase meat and produce locally? Are we willing to market our meat and produce locally? Can we commit to making it happen for the benefit of all?



Energy Freedom

Many of you remember the fake gas shortage of the 1970's when prices shot up at the gas pumps, gas was rationed, service stations closed down except at certain hours. It was later proven to have been a hoax. There were no apologies or even any action taken against the perpetrators of the fraud. Well, fuel prices are still going up, there are predicted shortages of natural gas and we pay whatever we are charged by the companies that control the various forms of energy. The irony is that there are unlimited energy sources available to all of us in the form of wind, sun, biomass, hydrogen, geothermal and hydro-and they are all renewable. Renewable means they are not depleted through use. Why do we sit around and complain about current energy prices when we could be developing and utilizing all of these available sources? We read articles and hear talks that indicate they are too expensive. Guess who writes those articles and gives those talks? It is usually someone who works for a multinational corporation who is making money from their monopoly on some form of energy. There are innumerable examples of individuals and communities who have decided to live independently of monopolized energy. There are people all over the West, Montana and in the Madison Valley who have made that choice. There is nothing really preventing many more from benefitting from the abundance of renewable energy available.

On Saturday, April 10th, at the Ennis High School, MVRG and Madison County Economic Development Council sponsored a Renewable Energy Fair. Bill VonBrethorst, owner of Planetary Systems, gave a presentation of how we got to where we are with grid distribution and deliverance of energy. He talked about the real costs involved and the potential of self reliance regarding our energy needs as a society. Bill has been involved in various aspects of energy distribution and production for 34 years.

He has lived off the grid for 12 years here in the valley. He has designed and installed renewable energy systems all around the world.

Corky Brittan, a rancher from the Livingston area was the second speaker at the Fair. Corky has utilized renewable energy at their place for over 30 years. He has helped develop a vertical axis wind turbine that is more ascetically acceptable by many. It is called a Zilo. It looks like a tall silo and fits into an agricultural landscape more naturally than a 300 foot windmill. Corky explained the plan for placing 4 beta models of the Zilo around Montana. The Madison Valley is a prime candidate for a location. There would be no cost for the installation and maintenance of the project. It would need to be placed where folks could see it. It would have to have community support for the installation. The Zilo would not require transmission lines but would utilize existing distribution structure. It has the potential to provide for community utility needs as well as neighborhood and agricultural applications.

Kathi Montgomery from Montana DEQ was the concluding speaker at the

Fair. She explained the various financial incentives and opportunities presently available for those interested in renewable energy projects. Kathi has been with DEQ for several years and has seen great progress in technology and financing for such endeavors.

There were several vendors of renewable energy equipment who had displays at the Fair. Following the speakers, those in attendance had time to visit with the various vendors to ask questions and see demonstrations of equipment.

At the conclusion of the Fair, several attendees traveled to Whitney Lake's new pyramid house to see an off grid system. This visit was very enlightening and motivational.

There will be more renewable energy events in the future to provide information about other sources of energy independence available to those who desire to be more self reliant and adaptable to changing economic conditions. If you have suggestions for topics to be discussed at these future events contact us at 682-3259.



A presentation at the Renewable Energy Fair

photo by Sunni Heikes-Knapton

Help map noxious weeds along the Madison River!

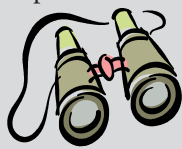
*submitted by Richard Lessner,
Madison River Foundation*

Noxious weeds not only are a problem for ranchers and farmers. These invasive alien plants threaten our rivers, streams and fisheries as well. They choke out native plant species, damage fragile riparian environments, cause soil erosion and stream sedimentation, harm water quality and fish spawning habitat.

On July 27th, volunteers from the Foundation, Trout Unlimited, the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group, the Madison and Gallatin Counties Weed Committees, the U.S. Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Center for Aquatic Nuisance Species, and BLM, will take to the boats to conduct a GPS mapping of noxious weeds on the banks and islands of the Madison from Reynolds Pass to Three Forks. The data will be built into an on-line digital map that will be useful in developing weed control, mitigation and eradication strategies.

This is an ambitious project and we need lots of help. If you own a drift boat or raft we need you to donate a day to help improve the Madison River. You don't need to know anything about noxious weeds to participate. We'll have trained and expert weed spotters in each boat. But we need volunteers in each boat to record the GPS data points and help spot and identify weeds.

•We'll conduct a training and orientation session for all participants 10 a.m. to Noon, Friday, July 23rd at Lions Club Park in Ennis.



•The July 27th day of mapping will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude with a BBQ 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Lions Club Park in Ennis.



Madison Farm to Fork celebrated its second year with their first Farmers' Market of the season on May 22. , Fortunately, the day's snow and rain did not dampen the spirits of our dedicated vendors and customers. Thanks to the generosity of the owners of Lone Elk Mall, the Market was able to move indoors. With any luck the community will be able to enjoy this year's remaining markets in the sunny open space at the Mall.

With the weather improving work will start in earnest on both the geothermal and teaching greenhouses. Materials obtained in Helena are currently on site, the property has been cleared and is ready for survey and excavation. This project has received partial funding from the Madison Conservation District, the Montana Community Fund, Montana PP&L, and the Cinnabar Foundation, as well as great support from the local community. Madison Farm to Fork's Dine for Dirt event held on Earth Day was well attended and raised almost \$1,500 for the purchase of topsoil.

Valley Garden Ranch to Host 2010 Noxious Weed Fundraiser

Steve and Gretchen Burke, owners of the Valley Garden Ranch, are the hosts for this year's annual noxious weed fundraiser, to be held on August 7, 2010! The ranch is simply beautiful and will make a great location for this annual dinner and auction, better known as the "Weeds Party".

Save the date and plan to attend this year's event at Valley Garden Ranch. A tour of the ranch is planned, along with an exciting auction line-up and great food as always! Look for your invitation in the mail the end of June.

This year's fundraiser will be the 12th annual event, and the proceeds go towards fighting noxious weeds here in the Madison Valley. The Weed Committee works hard to promote outreach and education, as well as put projects on-the-ground. Recent projects include: the Madison River Project; Madison Bio-control project, Norwegian Creek Special Weed Initiative, Cows Eat Weeds!, Bear Creek Noxious Weed and Education Project and the Missouri-Madison River project. The committee is pleased to partner with a number of private, state and federal organizations. Through cooperation a lot has been accomplished, but there is still much work to be done.

The continued success of this fundraiser relies heavily on our generous donors. If you are interested in donating an auction item or underwriting an item, your support is always welcome and appreciated.

If you'd like to be added to our mailing list or discuss a donation please call the committee at 406.682.3731.

A Note from the Weed Committee.....



It is finally beginning to feel like spring in Madison County! While this is a beautiful time of year, it is sometimes hard to remember how much is really going on out there on the landscape. Birds are singing, grass is greening up, flowers are blooming and on a less positive note, noxious weeds are germinating and beginning to grow across the landscape.

Noxious weeds are plants that were introduced either intentionally or accidentally, some being brought into the United States in contaminated crop seed; others were ornamentals that escaped from gardens or flower beds. Most weeds produce high numbers of seeds that can remain viable in the soil for many years, are extremely competitive and effectively crowd out native plants and grasses. As always, the trouble with invasives is that once they become established they are very hard to control or eradicate.

Agricultural producers should be concerned about noxious weeds and how they can significantly impact the profitability of their operation. Weed infestations can negatively affect the productivity of rangeland by reducing the amount of desirable forage. In cultivated areas weeds can invade croplands and result in lower yields, loss of weed-free certifications and higher chemical costs. Additionally, invasive species can upset the natural balance of the environment by reducing water quality and quantity, and negatively affecting fish and wildlife habitat. These are just a few of the reasons that noxious weeds should be taken seriously.

So, what can you do to help further the battle against noxious weeds in this

beautiful county? You can start by being aware of the issue and knowing what weeds are likely to be found in this area, as well as new invaders that are knocking at the door. Humans are one of the most important vectors responsible for transporting and introducing invasive species. Simple steps like cleaning equipment and trailers before moving into new areas can help stop the spread of weeds from one place to another. Should you identify weeds on your property, work to eliminate them yourself or hire a licensed commercial applicator. If you prefer to not use chemicals to control your weeds, learn more about other appropriate treatment options. Madison County has a biological control program that facilitates the release of special insects to help control spotted knapweed and leafy spurge. In some cases hand-pulling, mowing or grazing can help.

We encourage everyone to become involved and learn about the organizations that are working to control and contain noxious weeds throughout the county and state. There are a variety of programs to help teach folks about noxious weeds, offer cost-share assistance to those fighting weeds on their properties, and share information on various weed control methods. The Madison County Weed Board can help identify noxious weed concerns, offer information about effective treatment options and cost-share programs. They also help train people interested in becoming licensed to purchase and apply herbicides. The Weed Board can be reached at 406.842.5595, or they also offer lots of good information online at <http://www.madison.mt.gov/departments/weed/weeds.asp>.

The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group has a Weed Committee that works to fight noxious weeds through a variety of outreach programs and on-the-ground projects. They are a non-profit organization and hold an annual fundraiser to help

support this important effort. This year's event will be held on August 7, 2010 and will be hosted by the Valley Garden Ranch. This annual fundraiser is a great place to learn more about noxious weeds and some of the various projects that are underway in the county. If you are interested in any of the Weed Committee's activities or projects, or to learn more about the fundraiser, please call 406.682.3731.



GOT COST-SHARE???

If you plan to treat weeds on your property this year you may be eligible to receive cost-share and be reimbursed for a portion of these expenses.

Funds are made available through a variety of programs and sources, including the:

*Madison County Weed Board
Madison Conservation District
MVRG Weed Committee
MT Noxious Weed Trust Fund*

Additionally, there are some backpack and trailer sprayers that the county and Weed Committee make available for public use.

For more information, contact the Madison County Weed Board at their new office in Alder - 842-5595, or the Weed Committee at 682-3731. Cost-share applications and general information are also available online at www.madison.mt.gov/departments/weed/weeds.asp.

Got Weeds? Get Bugs!

The Madison County Bio-Control Program is getting ready to kick off the summer season! With the help of two students, Ennis science teacher Mellissa Newman will work throughout the summer to help promote this effort that focuses on using biological control insects to help control noxious weeds. The “bug crew” will meet with interested landowners and determine if their properties are good sites to release these special insects that target either spotted knapweed or leafy spurge. Some of the factors they assess include: weed distribution and density; soil type; proximity to water; elevation, etc. If the site is determined to be a suitable one, the crew will return and release 100+ insects that will hopefully go to work attacking the weeds in question. They will also spend a lot of time monitoring old release sites, and collecting and re-distributing insects from highly successful sites where the number of insects has exponentially grown since establishment. They will also be present at several events throughout the summer to offer outreach and educational resources to the public.

This project is made possible through funding from the Madison Conservation District, Madison County Weed Board, Bureau of Land Management, Ennis School and the MVRG Weed Committee. Services are provided to county residents for free, but a \$20 donation per release is greatly appreciated. Donations help guarantee the continued operation of the project.

If you are interested in learning more about the possibilities associated with biological control insects, please contact the MVRG Weed Committee at 406.682.3731.



Madison Owens (left) and Taylre Sitz show off a few of the “bugs” they helped collect last summer



*Madison Owens (left) and Courtney Glines sweep-net to collect *Larinus minutus*, a seed-head weevil*



Cyphocleonus achates, a root-boring weevil attacks spotted knapweed

Water Quality Monitoring Volunteers Needed



They may not have super powers or wear masks or capes, but our valley will soon see a new group of heroes patrolling our area. The Madison Watershed Stream Team members will be donning boots and waders, armed and educated to collect water quality data on local streams. These hardy souls are trained and qualified- and you can join them!

Community members interested in becoming involved in the Madison Stream Team are invited to attend upcoming evening trainings, June 15 and 16. These sessions will provide the basics on water quality monitoring- what, why and how. The sessions will include a classroom session and a field session, so team members will be ready to tackle the grass roots monitoring program on 4 local streams. These trainings are offered free by water quality experts, and provide our community with a chance to become informed and involved with a crucial natural resource. Attendance is necessary at both the June 15 session from 5-8 pm at the library, and the June 16 session from 4-9 pm at the Jumping Horse Ranch.

For more information or to register for the event, contact Sunni Heikes-Knapton, Madison Watershed Coordinator 406.682.3181.

Bear Creek Days - An Outdoor Classroom

Students from Ennis, Harrison, Cardwell, Sheridan and West Yellowstone attended Bear Creek Days this year. This fun outdoor education event is sponsored by the Forest Service, with help and support from many organizations.



On May 18, 19 and 20 students were welcomed to Bear Creek Days, with the goal of getting excited about the environment and natural resources issues. While there they broke into groups and rotated through learning stations that focused on a breadth of topics. There were classes on fire ecology, forestry, predators and prey, gold panning, leave no trace, fly fishing, noxious weeds and more.

Notable highlights from the event included a bear that came into camp on Wednesday, and incredibly inclement weather on Thursday. However, most importantly the kids had a great time and got to enjoy being in the beautiful outdoors, no matter the weather.



Each day a bbq lunch was provided to all in attendance. This was made possible with the help of the Madison Conservation District, Madison River Founda-

tion and the MVRG Weed Committee. Thanks to all the volunteers who came out and helped cook and serve. It was a great effort and appreciated by all.

Sun Ranch Change in Ownership

Roger Lang has sold most of his holdings in the Sun Ranch. He kept some property along the Madison River and at Madison Bend. He is presently pursuing some other ventures outside of the valley. He is hopeful to be more involved again in the Madison Valley in the future.

The new owners are Richard Adkerson, CEO of Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold; Charles 'Chip' Goodyear, former CEO of BHP Hilton; and private investor Bobby Patrick. The three are good friends and plan to use the ranch as a get away for friends and family. The ranch will be running contract cattle this summer similar to operations of the past several years. Clark Adkerson is general manager and will be spending much of his time at the

ranch to oversee day to day operations. We wish the new owners success as part of the Madison Valley community.

On April 20th there was a MVRG meeting held to pay tribute to Roger for his involvement and many contributions to the valley during his time of ownership of the Sun Ranch. He was presented with a custom styled hat by John Crumley and a gift certificate for a custom hat from Westrends.



Where are the Sage Grouse?

Sage Grouse were recently designated as a warranted species in relationship to the Endangered Species Act. This means that US Fish and Wildlife Services feels the number of Sage Grouse is low enough to be considered endangered. They are not listed because there are other species which are considered endangered which are of greater concern to US Fish and Wildlife Services. Historically there have been Sage Grouse in the Madison Valley in varying numbers. There are consistent sightings of the species each year. On a national basis the Sage Grouse population has declined 90% from what their numbers may have been 200 years ago. Montana and Wyoming still have viable populations and are pursuing efforts to maintain those numbers.

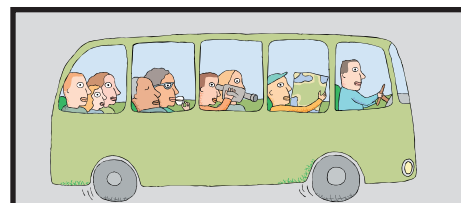


Agreements are in place for Montana to provide 100 Sage Grouse to Canada this year to supplement their declining numbers. We still have a Sage Grouse hunting season in Montana. All of this information seems a little incongruent with the designation of the species. The concern for Montana residents is that if the species is listed as endangered that triggers the implementation of actions that are far reaching and often overbearing for many different interests in the state.

MVRG and others in Southwest Montana are pursuing a proactive, collaborative direction to minimize the potential for future declines in sage grouse numbers. We are at the forefront of implementing practices and strategies which will recover critical areas of habitat to maintain a viable population of Sage Grouse.

The most critical aspect of any species that are threatened or endangered is loss of habitat. Changes in land use and/or vegetation can have significant impact on habitat and then populations decrease in numbers. When we consider that the human population of the US and Montana

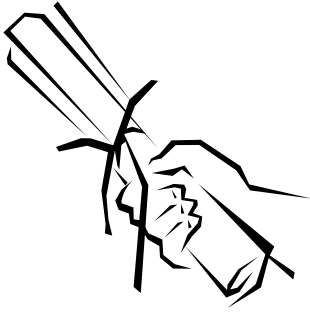
has doubled over the past 30 years, it is easy to envision why habitat has been declining for Sage Grouse and other species. Large areas of land have been converted from agriculture to residential and industrial use. Areas that were once forests and native grasslands are now crisscrossed with roads, power lines, pipelines and homes. The solution will be more complex than merely creating wilderness areas. Families and communities must be sustainable economically for the benefit of the overall economy. There is a point where the well being of the human population will have precedence over the well being of some species in some areas. Large metropolitan areas have sacrificed vast areas of wildlife habitat for residential and commercial development. The need for those residential and commercial areas is of greater value for society than the use of that area for wildlife. Local communities are best able to make decisions about that appropriate balance but must have valid information to support their decisions. We invite the interest and participation of all those who benefit from the many amenities of this valley to do all that is necessary to keep Sage Grouse off the endangered species list.



Summer Tours

During the past ten years MVRG has sponsored many tours in the valley to help residents and visitors see how various issues play out. Topics have ranged from wolves, elk, wild-land fire interface, private-public lands relationship, livestock and wildlife grazing relationships, water quality, renewable energy, growth and weed management. We are committed to continue providing educational opportunities such as these. The sustainability of our valley and community is dependant upon how well we understand the relationships between the economy, ecology and society here. If there are topics or resource issues which any of you feel need to be addressed or revisited, please contact us at 682-3259.

MVRG Weed Committee Awards Scholarship



The MVRG Weed Committee was pleased to select Ennis graduating senior Zach McBride as the recipient of their \$500 scholarship. Zach plans to attend college at Montana State University and major in geology and biology. This is the second year that the committee has presented a scholarship to a graduating student in the Madison Valley. Theron Hamilton, a Harrison High graduate was awarded the first scholarship in 2009.



Zach McBride, 2010 Ennis High School Graduate

Education and outreach are a high priority for the Weed Committee. They offer science fair awards for those students choosing to present science projects that focus on noxious weeds. In past years they have made awards at the local, regional and state science fairs.

The committee also strives to offer educational materials and resources to interested individuals at various public events. If you have an event in mind where noxious weed education would be appropriate please let us know.

Will you join us in our efforts?

The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group works to protect the ranching way of life and the biologically healthy open spaces on which ranching depends.

Yes! I want to help the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group.

Please accept my tax deductible contribution of :

____ \$25 - \$100 ____ \$125 - \$250 ____ \$275 - \$500 ____ \$1,000
____ \$5,000 ____ \$10,000 ____ \$25,000 ____ other

**annual membership dues are \$25*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

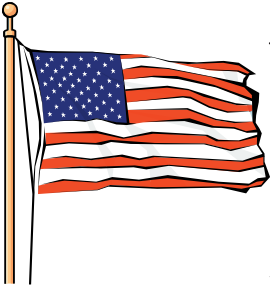
PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

MVRG - P.O. BOX 330 - ENNIS, MT 59729

(406) 682 - 3259 MVRANCH@3RIVERS.NET

*The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization
and deeply appreciates your financial support!*



A note from MVRG President, John Crumley

Greetings from Spring! I am looking out the window at a May shower, well, May snow

shower, no, it is a blizzard. It is still snowing and blowing after 14 hours. It is Montana in the spring.

I read an article of a summer in the 1800's when the lakes stayed frozen in the northeastern US all summer. The cause was a volcano eruption that placed a large amount of ash in the atmosphere and it caused the climate to cool down. Crops were lost and many faced hunger and starvation. It seems like we can see some similarities today with the volcano in Iceland pouring a growing amount of ash into the atmosphere. Just when we thought we were having global warming.

Do you know it is so damp in Montana that my clothes are shrinking just hanging in the closet? I guess that is the problem.

We are all hearing about the problems on Wall Street and the many devious ways in which people who were entrusted with our investments manipulated the rules to pad their own pockets. Where are those people's mothers and fathers that should have taught them moral discipline? Our great country is in trouble because we fail to stand up for what is right. Personal and corporate greed have overpowered the principle of integrity and moral discipline.

Living in the Madison we are also faced with choices about being stewards of our resources and investments in the last great place. We have to ac-

cept responsibility for doing the right things morally on both sides of the issues. Take for instance the Sage Grouse issue. Private and public land stewards are being sued because population numbers are down in many areas. But, we have people who are doing the best job that has been done in the last century of managing grazing lands while trying to make a living. Courts often make decisions about technicalities of the law, not what is actually being done on the ground for the good of the environment and economy. The results of those decisions establish policy which ignores moral integrity and common sense management.

Don't you think that those of us who live in this valley could work together collaboratively to find appropriate solutions without the involvement of the courts?

