Glacier County Still GROWING Strong in Agriculture

What’s Happening In and Around Glacier County
- Weed Corner
- 310 Permits – What you need to know
- Milk River Watershed Alliance
- Annual Crop Tour
- What’s going on with FSA
- Women In Agriculture Book Release

Summer Issue 2018
The Public is always invited to attend the meetings of the Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the USDA Building.

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**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Supervisor Summit August 29/30 Helena, MT
- Montana Range Tour– September 5/6 Sidney, MT
- Area III Meeting Sept. 20th Havre, MT
- Glacier County Conservation District web site [www.glacierccd.org](http://www.glacierccd.org)

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Death Camas confirmed in Glacier County
Kari Lewis, MSU Extension Agent – Glacier County

In late June I had a sample of the death camas plant come into the office, and our range specialist, Dr. Jeff Mosley has confirmed that this is, “Another big year” for death camas across Montana. Death camas is a toxic rangeland plant that resembles wild onion (and can cause severe illness in humans if mistaken for wild onion). In my producer’s case, they have lost two healthy calves presumably to death camas, so I wanted to take some time to alert producers to the plant.

Death camas is a perennial bulbous native forb in the lily family. Plants have linear grass-like leaves and the flowers are in panicles with creamy white petals. It does somewhat resemble a shorter version of Beargrass, which you commonly spot in Glacier National Park.

Death camas is highly toxic to cattle, sheep and horses. The entire plant is toxic, but especially the bulb of the plant. When soil is moist, such as after a rain like we had in mid-June, the bulb is much easier for livestock to pull out of the ground and ingest. Sublethal doses of death camas can also decrease animal weight gain, milk production, and inhibit reproduction.

Death camas greens up early in the season so it is more palatable than other plants. As the death camas matures, it will become less palatable and hopefully livestock will instead prefer grass.

So, why are we seeing death camas this year? Following a drought year, there is less carryover grass from the previous growing season so there may be less other forage available to buffer a toxic plant. In addition, some research suggests that death camas is more toxic to livestock during cool, stormy weather, such as we had around the time the plant was found. As the barometer drops, the chemical structure of the toxins in death camas actually becomes more toxic which increases the chances of livestock poisoning as they have to eat even less of it to consume a lethal dose.

If you do have death camas in your pastures, there are a few recommendations:

- Delay turn-out to those pastures to allow the death camas plant to mature and to allow the grass to grow more. Toxicity is most common if grass is in short supply or there is little residual grass from the previous year.
- Graze death camas pastures lightly. If livestock are short on available forage, they are more likely to consume plants such as death camas. You may consider grazing those pastures very lightly, and then coming back to them later in the season after the death camas has matured and is less palatable.
- In terms of chemical control, 2,4-D can be used early in the growing season before the flowering stalk appears. We are past that control window now, but producers could flag or GPS spots where death camas are so that control can be applied next spring.

- If you have plants you believe to be death camas, you can bring them into your local MSU Extension Office for confirmation.
Death camas (Zigadenus spp.) is a native, cool season forb that occurs throughout the western half of North America. It is a perennial plant that can grow between 6-28 inches tall. The bulb of the plant is found between 2-8 inches below the soil surface. Its grass-like leaves grow mainly from the base of the stem. The leaves are V-shaped and can reach up to a foot long and be over 3/8-inch wide. The two most prevalent species are meadow death camas (Z. venenosus) and mountain death camas (Z. elegans). While both species can be found in Montana, meadow death camas is the most common and can be found in foothills and on range. Meadow death camas stems generally produce a single bolt with a cone-shaped head of flowers that have a greenish-white to cream coloring. While mountain death camas has the same coloring, the flowers are less densely packed at the top of the bolt. In foothills, flowering generally occurs in April or May, whereas in higher elevations, it generally flowers from late June into July. All parts of the death camas plant have a toxic alkaloid present. Seeds are the most toxic, followed by the bulbs, leaves, and then stems. There are, however, multiple factors that vary the plant’s toxicity. Some of these include the species of death camas (i.e. meadow or mountain), moisture levels, growth stage, and geographical location. At least one study has shown that soil moisture stress increases toxic alkaloid levels within death camas plants.

Death camas has a broad habitat preference. It can live in moist meadows to dry rocky hillsides, in shade or full sun, in shrub, grassland, or pine communities, and in elevations between 1,400 and 8,000 feet. Range management can affect its presence in an area. Overgrazed, stressed lands are apt to have an increase in death camas, and therefore death camas poisonings in livestock. Early spring growth of death camas ahead of other forages creates an environment where livestock are more likely to eat death camas plants, especially in overgrazed pasture. While death camas is generally non-palatable to livestock, a lack of other vegetation pushes them towards grazing available green forage. Other times to be on the lookout for death camas consumption by livestock is after spring snow storms, when it can be the only available plant above the snow, or after fire when the underground bulb re-generates leaves and again, is the only green plant readily available for consumption. All livestock, including cattle, horses, and sheep, are susceptible to poisoning from death camas alkaloids. Because sheep are more likely to graze forbs than other livestock, they tend to be poisoned most often, however, cattle are more sensitive to alkaloids present in death camas. A 100-pound sheep may die eating only half-pound of green foliage (Panter, et al., 2011). In other cases, it may take up to two pounds of green foliage consumption to be deadly. Symptoms of death camas poisoning can occur several hours to one day after ingestion. These may include bloody, frothy salivation, depression, nausea, and vomiting, and grinding of teeth. More severe symptoms include loss of coordination, weakness and staggering, a fast pulse that is weak, labored breathing and gasping, coma and eventual death due to heart failure (Panter, et al., 2011). There is no known treatment for death camas poisoning, so prevention is key. Well-fed animals are less likely to ingest death camas that may be present. Do not turn out livestock on pasture that has a lot of death camas without enough other vegetation for them to graze. Do not harvest and bale meadows with death camas present; the leaves will still be toxic when fed at a later date. Wild onion looks similar to death camas. There have been a few cases of people mistakenly consuming death camas, thinking they were eating wild onion. One major difference between the two plants is that wild onion has a strong onion odor, whereas death camas has no odor to any part of the plant. If unsure which plant it is, do not consume it. Death camas can be controlled in the early spring when the plant has three to six leaves by spraying 2,4-D at the rate of 1½ to 3 pounds of active ingredient per acre (Panter et al., 2011). When flowering bolts appear, it is too late for the herbicide to be effective. If it is a small area, hand pulling the entire plant, including the bulb, out of the ground is also an option. Death camas is only toxic when consumed, so when hand pulling be sure to wear gloves and wash hands when finished so cross-contamination doesn’t occur. When infestations are low with other quality vegetation, death camas consumption is usually avoided.

- Article from MSU Extension
What is a 310 permit?

Many of you are probably wondering what this permit is and why it is so important. A 310 permit is a document required by law for projects on natural perennial-flowing streams, including the bed, immediate banks, and channels. The Conservation District is the local government entity responsible for administering the 310 law as set forth in the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act. If you are planning any project, including the construction of new facilities or the modification, operation, and maintenance of an existing facility that may affect the natural existing shape and form of any stream, its banks, or its tributaries, a 310 permit is required. Any private entity or nongovernmental individual that proposes to work in or near a stream on public or private land must obtain a 310 permit prior to any activity in or near a perennial flowing stream. Applications are available online at: www.dnrc.mt.gov or at your local Conservation District office. After the application is filled out and submitted to the Conservation District office, a field inspection is scheduled with a member of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the District, and the landowners, whereby they mutually agree to an acceptable means of accomplishing the project. A report is made at the next Conservation District board of supervisors meeting, where the board will approve or disapprove the permit. Unless waived, there is a 15-day waiting period until work can commence on the project. A permit will not be issued after a project has begun and all fees or penalties will apply. “A person who initiates a project without a permit is guilty of a misdemeanor. Upon conviction, the person shall be punished by a fine not to exceed $500 or by a civil penalty not to exceed $500 for each day that the person(s) continues to physically alter or modify the stream.”

For More Information regarding 310 permits contact Tabitha Furnare at (406)873-4292 x 101 or at glaciercountycd@gmail.com

Congrats to Scholarship recipients

Canon Bradley and Owen Gustafson

Glacier County Conservation District awarded Canon Bradley and Owen Gustafson each a $500 Scholarship towards schooling in an Agriculture related field. Congratulations to both young men and best wishes for a successful future!
Lower Milk River Flooding

The lower Milk River valley saw extensive flooding throughout April 2018. The prairie snowpack and lingering winter resulted in high runoff events for Milk River tributaries once temperatures began to warm up. Sage Creek, Red Rock Creek, Battle Creek, Beaver Creek, Peoples Creek and many other tributaries were inundated with water emptying into the Milk River. Flooding occurred in Liberty, Hill, Blaine, Phillips, and Valley Counties with FEMA disaster declaration. The Milk River Watershed Alliance played an integral role with the National Weather Service (NWS) on the Milk River Flood Task Force. The task force submitted flood water observations on tributaries and the Milk to the NWS. Continual observations were made to track the surge of water to help establish flood watch and advisories for residents, landowners, and municipalities on the Milk River. Flood advisories are beneficial to residents because it allows producers the warning to move livestock, hay, or equipment in the floodplain, it allows residents time to purchase flood insurance, and municipalities time to prepare for potential impacts. The flooding that occurred in the lower Milk River valley was a result of prairie snowmelt, the typical runoff from mountain snowpack occurs in June.
It’s hard to believe that just a mere three months ago we were fighting soaking wet fields and today we are faced with continued hot and dry conditions here in Glacier County.

With that being said, it has made me ponder on the ways that we have utilized various conservation practices on our farms and ranches to help with moisture conservation. I recently had a visit with a couple from Minnesota that were traveling through Cut Bank. They were interested in what crops and livestock were raised in our area as well as the annual precipitation we receive. When I told them how much rainfall we received on an annual basis they were amazed by the appearance of the crops they had driven by that day. I believe that this is all due to the conservation practices that we have used in water conservation in our area.

We held a couple of very successful events this summer. First we celebrated the book release for the Women in Ag oral history project. We conducted this in conjunction with the Cut Bank Chamber of Commerce and would like to thank them for their assistance and support. It was a wonderful event to celebrate many of the local women who appear in the book.

We also conducted our annual crop tour and concluded with a barbeque in the park. Once again the event was well attended with attendees learning about many new varieties of canola, spring wheat, winter wheat, and barley. Thank you to John Miller and the WTARC staff for continuing the plots in our area and conducting the plot tours.

With the summer heat turning on its starting to look more and more like harvest time in our area. I want to wish all the area farmers a safe and bountiful harvest.

Until next time.............

Todd Eney
Watercraft Inspection Statistics

Montana inspectors have stopped 12 boats with invasive mussels this year. The boats came from Arizona, Texas, California and the Great Lakes area. Most of the boats were passing through Montana destined for Idaho, Washington and Canada.

When a mussel is discovered, the watercraft inspectors decontaminate the boat, lock the boat to the trailer and notify the state or province where the boat is destined. Six of the boats had been recently purchased from another owner.

Watercraft inspection stations will operate through the summer months and close between Labor Day and the end of October, depending on the location. See CleanDrainDryMT.com for station times and dates of operation.

Monitoring for AIS

FWP monitors for all aquatic invasive species, including zebra and quagga mussels, Asian clams, New Zealand mudsnails, Eurasian watermilfoil, flowering rush, curlyleaf pondweed, and other species not known to occur in Montana.

The monitoring and early detection efforts have increased steadily over the years, but nearly tripled during 2017. Since there are a variety of aquatic invasive species, different sampling techniques are used to increase the likelihood of early detection. In 2017, a total of 260 waterbodies were inspected in Montana.

For more information visit Montana Fish and Wildlife’s Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter.
Summer is underway and the Glacier County farm loan team has been enjoying the beautiful weather to get out and see the growing calves and crops. There has been a fair amount of interest in real estate as it seems there has been some real estate coming up for sale. Interest rates are starting to move upward, so if you have been considering a loan, now would be a good time to lock in the rates. On real estate, there are financing options at 1.5%, 2.5%, and 4.125% currently and funds left. Summer is a good time to work on these deals as it takes a while to get a real estate appraisal completed and it is nice to get those done while the weather is good and the appraiser can see the land.

Another good thing to keep in mind if you are looking at financing at some point in the future is pulling a credit report on yourself to see if you have any items that need cleaned up. While FSA does not have a specific credit score requirement like a bank does, we do look for a pattern of slow payments, collections and charge offs. If there are items that need work in these areas, take time now to put together a payment plan that will help you get these items brought current or get inaccuracies removed from your credit report. You can get a free credit report once a year from each of the three credit bureaus – TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian. Experts recommend staging those every four months so you can stay on top of any issues that might come up.

If you do need help in working out a budget and repayment plan, FSA has resources that can help along with your local extension office or Native American Community Development Corporation has a credit counseling service that has been very beneficial for many people here locally. You can reach the FSA farm loan staff at 406-873-5618 ext. 2 and ask for Lacy, Kris, or Shandi. Have a great summer!

Lacy Roberts
Glacier County Farm Loan Manager

FSA and GCCD win Chili Cook off at Lewis and Clark Festival in Cut Bank!

Pictured: Shandi Bradley, Kris Nicholson & Tabitha Furnare. Not pictured: Lacy Roberts
Celebrating Montana Women in Agriculture

Glacier County Conservation District hosted a free BBQ and book signing in the Cut Bank City Park on Wednesday June 27th for the release of the book “Montana Women From the Ground Up.” The book features 15 women from Glacier county and their experience with conservation. Wiley Gustafson played live music and a panel of 5 of the women featured in the book answered questions about their lives and contribution to agriculture. Glacier County wants to thank all of the women for being willing to tell us their stories as well as Linda Brander from the DNRC and Belinda Knapton for all the time and effort spent making this book a reality.

Books available for purchase from Glacier County Conservation District at the USDA building in Cut Bank
Glacier County Map Books  
$50.00

Imagery Map Books  
$60.00

Glacier County Wall Map  
$25.00

Women In AG Books  
$20.00

Now available at the  
Glacier County Conservation District  
#1 Third St. NE, Cut Bank, Mt. 873.4292x101

We would like to extend a special thank you to the individual business's that make it possible for us to provide you with this newsletter

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-First Interstate Bank

-Frontline Ag

-McDonalds

-Northern Chrysler

-Royal Real Estate

-Stockman Bank

$25.00 MINIMUM OR

1-400 trees-$25.00 rental per day

401-1000 trees-7.5c/tree per day

1001 or more trees-5c/tree per day

Now available at the Glacier County Conservation District

NOW AVAILABLE

3 FOOT SURVEY FLAGS- $20.00 PER BUNDLE OF 100 FLAGS

SMALLER RAIN GAUGES- $10.00 EACH

LARGER RAIN GAUGES- $ 39.95 EACH
August

- Aug 29/30
  Supervisor Summit
  Helena, MT

September

- Sept 3 Labor Day
  USDA office closed
- Sept 5/6 Range tour
  Sidney, MT
- Sept 13 2018 Summer/Fall CRP grazing period ends
- Sept 20 Area III Meeting
  Havre, MT

October

- Oct 1 NAP App closing date
- Oct 8 Columbus day
  USDA office closed

November

- Nov 12 Veterans day
  USDA office closed
- Nov 12-15 MACD Convention
  Billings, MT
- Nov 22 Thanksgiving
  USDA office closed

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