



Mid-year check on Natural Resource Issues/Project Development :

Purpose: This month may seem like a repeat, but the importance is high enough to warrant it. In December 2009 and January 2010, ten-minute training (exercises) were sent to conservation districts asking them to identify their top 3 natural resource issues in their own district. With the ever changing focus on our Montana's resources, it is imperative we stay ahead of the game on addressing our states resource issues. Also, recently you received a letter from the NRCS requesting the Districts identify their priorities thru your local working group. This effort will help with that request as well. Future project funding could be prioritized toward your top resource issues.

Goal: TWO-FOLD

1. Address your resource issues:

- Encourage districts to talk/discuss **WHAT ARE** your resource concerns in their district today.

*"Don't be afraid to **THINK BIG**" ...
MACD board member...*

- Identify issues and begin to address those concerns.
- 2. Identify projects that can be put on the ground.**
- Have a potential project identified with a scope and budget, and submit it to MACD by November 2010. This will help MACD's goal of securing general funding, at the next legislative session, to develop and implement your projects.
 - **Better position your district for future funding of projects that address your resource concerns.**

As a reminder, CD's have statutory authority to do just about anything that will address the conservation of soil, water, and related resources. Look at page 21 in your 'CD law book'. Don't be afraid to think outside the box. After all, you are elected officials, and have authority to address a multitude of things.



Develop a project and the money will follow...

Natural Resource Issues: There are a wide variety of natural resource issues or topics that can be addressed with projects administered or coordinated by your district. Compare your resource issues to neighboring CD's. (see attached spreadsheet of submitted resource issues). Maybe you have a common issue that you can work on together on a larger project/demonstration scale.

Examples of resource issues on a large scale that have been submitted that could be multi-district:

- Noxious weeds
- Rangeland Health
- Grazing on Public land
- Water Quality/Quantity
- Soil erosion/health
- Riparian protection

TO DO:

1. Supervisors, spend time **identifying and prioritizing** your top natural resource issues within your district.
2. **Discuss** your top 3 natural resource issues with the other supervisors. *Be specific on what your issues are. For example, weeds are an issue, but identify type and location such as drainage or area.*
3. As you think about and discuss natural resource issues, **ideas, thoughts or comments** may arise on how these issues can be addressed. Jot those ideas down for future reference as well on the Potential Projects list.
4. **Don't** let anything inhibit your thoughts such as, "that'd be too costly", or "that'll never happen", or "we can't make a difference". Think positive, and good things will come.
5. **Fill out the Developing a project worksheet** (attached) and send into DNRC. If you need assistance with this, please contact us. We urge you to help us through this process.

"Ultimately, we need to stop letting the program money direct your priorities."

Joyce Swartzendruber