

# Conservation Pathways

Fall 2011

## Important Dates to Remember

### November 2011

Montana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting  
November 6 - 9, 2011; Missoula, Montana  
For more information: 406-587-3153

American Indian Science and Engineering  
Society (AISES) National Conference  
November 10-12, 2011; Minneapolis, MN  
For more information: <http://www.aises.org/nationalconference>

National Tribal Water Quality Conference  
November 14-17, 2011; Santa Fe, NM  
For more information: [Arazan.nancy@epa.gov](mailto:Arazan.nancy@epa.gov)

Montana Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting  
November 16 - 18, 2011; Helena, Montana  
For more information: 406-443-5711

Montana Grain Growers Association Convention  
November 29 - December 1, 2011; Great Falls, Montana  
For more information:  
<http://www.mgga.org/convention/convention.html>

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Intertribal Agriculture Council and Indian  
Nations Conservation Alliance Ag Symposium  
December 5-9, 2011; Las Vegas, Nevada  
For more information:  
<http://www.indianaglink.com/symposium.html>

Montana Organic Association Conference  
December 9 - 10, 2011; Billings, Montana  
For more information:  
<http://www.montanaorganicassociation.org/conferences.htm>

Montana Stockgrowers Association State Convention  
December 15-17, 2011; Billings, Montana  
For more information: <http://www.mtbeef.org>

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## A Note from the State Conservationist

Montana State Conservationist, Joyce Swartzendruber, would like to begin the first edition of Conservation Pathways with a special message to readers.

Dear Friends,

I am extremely pleased to share this first edition of our Tribal Outreach Newsletter with you. We have an opportunity through this newsletter to bring you a great deal of information about NRCS that can assist Tribes in accessing our programs.

NRCS has a growing tradition of providing technical and financial assistance to Montana tribes through our seven tribal offices across the state. These dedicated employees are there to make sense of the federal opportunities that are available for conservation of land, water, air, plant, and animal resources. We hope that through this newsletter we can make you more aware of the things we have to offer on the lands that you manage.

We also have opportunities for employment that we will encourage through this letter. I have found that we have a great need to continue to hire new soil conservationists, range management specialists, biologists, engineers, and technicians all across Montana. Any of our employees can help you learn about what it's like to work for NRCS if you are interested.



*Joyce Swartzendruber, NRCS State Conservationist in Montana.*





# Chief Plenty Coups Cottonwood Tree Cuttings

*Jeremy Not Afraid, District Conservationist, Crow Agency*

**The "crew" gathers near the Chief Plenty Coups' Sacred Spring.**



**LBHC students George Real Bird and Les Nomee carefully choose which cutting to take.**



On February 15th, Chief Plenty Coups State Park welcomed students from Little Big Horn College (LBHC) and NRCS employees from the Bridger Plant Materials Center and the Crow Agency field office. The shared mission of the day was to get cuttings from the native cottonwood trees at the Park and cuttings from the cottonwood trees that Chief Plenty Coups planted at his home more than 100 years ago.



**LBHC students Jade White Clay-Nelson and Lydina Big Man collect their cuttings from one of Chief Plenty Coups' cottonwood trees.**

Chief Plenty Coups State Park is situated on the Crow Reservation near the town of Pryor, Montana, and was the home to the last chief of the Crow Tribe, Plenty Coups. As a young boy, Plenty Coups fasted in the Crazy Mountains and received a vision that showed him many things to help him throughout his life. In one part of these visions, Plenty Coups was shown three springs in the Pryor area and he chose a spring that came out from the base of a cottonwood tree. Near this Sacred Spring is where he later built his home on the Crow Reservation.

The afternoon was started off inside the park's visitor center with the students from LBHC and a prayer and brief history of Chief Plenty Coups and his home site by Vincent Goes Ahead, Jr. Mr. Goes Ahead, a Crow Tribal member, is a resident of Pryor and a member of the "Friends of Plenty Coups" organization. Following Mr. Goes Ahead, Joe Scianna and Susan Winslow from the Bridger PMC gave an overview of the process of getting cuttings from the cottonwoods at the Park and how they will be prepared at the PMC for replanting in the spring of 2012. Unlike plants grown from seed, Joe explained, trees grown from cuttings will be virtual genetic matches of the trees that Plenty Coups planted near his home and from the cottonwood at the Sacred Spring, which is located near Plenty Coups' house.

Now it was time for the students to get to work. Almost 200 cuttings were collected from the site with the goal of 100 "Plenty Coups" cottonwood trees to be planted in 2012. The group was fortunate to have a 50-degree day in February to collect the cuttings.

There is already one area that the Crow Tribe has expressed interest in planting some of the "Plenty Coup" cottonwood trees. It is at the 180-acre Tribally-owned Cline's Island, which is an island within the Big Horn River, where 20 acres of Russian olive and salt cedar were removed in 2009 through the EQIP Russian Olive/Salt Cedar Special Initiative.

The remaining balance of the "Plenty Coups" cottonwood trees will be distributed back to the Chief Plenty Coup State Park, Little Big Horn College, and various schools on the Crow Reservation.



*Group photo with seven LBHC students along with LBHC Ag Program Director Birgit Graf and two NRCS employees from the Bridger Plant Materials Center.*



## Student Trainee Opportunities Available for Summer 2012

Are you a high school or college student who enjoys interacting with people and working outdoors? Then a career with the Natural Resources Conservation Service might be the job for you! The NRCS is part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that works with landowners to conserve natural resources on private lands, providing both technical and financial assistance.

Student trainee positions under the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) are available in a variety of job areas. Here are a few examples:



### Soil Conservationist

Provides technical advice on installing conservation practices such as stockwater and irrigation systems, and planting of grass, trees or wildlife cover. Provides advice to landowners and government agencies in the development of their natural resources.

### Civil or Ag Engineer

Assists in engineering design of dams, stockwater projects, and irrigation systems. Makes on-site inspections, computes quantity and most of materials, and gathers basic planning data for these structures.

### Soil Scientist

Makes sample drillings in the field to identify and classify soils, gathers information for soil surveys such as land use and crop data, and is generally responsible for soil surveys.

### Rangeland Management Specialist

Helps ranchers develop good grazing systems by developing a conservation plan, gives advice on the best grasses to grow and ways to improve and protect rangeland.

In order to be eligible for the SCEP program, you need to be a high school or college student who plans to earn a bachelor's degree with a major in natural resources, engineering, or another agricultural area. Students work full-time typically during summer vacation, with the student receiving guidance from trained NRCS employees. Depending on the job area and location of the office, SCEP students experience a wide variety of field and office experience. SCEP students can be eligible for noncompetitive conversion to a career-conditional appointment upon completion of their college education requirements and minimum work hours.

If you would like to learn more about careers that are available with the NRCS, you can check out the following webpage: <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/about/careers.html>. You can also visit: <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news/Videos/greatplacetolearn.html> to watch a video about the SCEP program in Montana. If you would like more information about student trainee positions available with the Montana NRCS, please contact the Human Resources Office, by writing to: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Federal Building Room 443, 10 East Babcock Street, Bozeman MT 59034; email: [sharon.huber@mt.usda.gov](mailto:sharon.huber@mt.usda.gov) or call (406) 587-6937.

### Montana NRCS Outreach Specialist Position Available

A job opportunity is available through the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) as a NRCS Outreach Specialist for the state of Montana. Under the general supervision of the IAC executive director, the incumbent will schedule and lead multi-day workshops and intensive technical assistance sessions at tribal headquarters or other central points in Montana Indian communities to disseminate information on the NRCS' general purpose and programs. The specialist will be required to travel approximately 10 days per month during peak seasons. Salary will be based on experience and qualifications. This announcement will remain open until the position is filled. For more information, or to apply, please submit a cover letter and resume to:

**Intertribal Agriculture Council**  
100 N 27th Street, Suite 500  
Billings, MT 59101

**Phone: 406-259-3525**

**Fax: 406-256-9980**

**Email: [rracine@indianaglink.com](mailto:rracine@indianaglink.com)**



2011 student trainees participate in outdoor orientation and training session near Helena, Montana.

# American Indian Science and Engineering Society Scholarship Reading Held

Seanna Sparks, AI/AN SEPM, District Conservationist, Hardin Field Office



Montana USDA NRCS reading in Bozeman.

## Some comments from participants:

*I truly enjoyed reading the student essays and learning about their passion for giving back to their community and their pride in their cultural identity.*



*It gave me a chance to see some of the challenges others are facing and overcoming while they are still able to be successful in their personal and professional lives.*



*Some of these students are absolutely exceptional. Blew my socks off, not just med school but high school as well. They probably all deserve a scholarship and will probably get academic scholarships as well.*



Representatives from the Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Forest Service, participated in the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Scholarship reading and ranking on July 26, 2011, at the Bozeman State NRCS Office. The scholarship ranking and reading was conducted for the A.T. Anderson Scholarship which is one of five scholarships that the AISES provides. It is estimated that 75 to 100 scholarships will be awarded this school year. Undergraduates will receive \$1,000 and graduate students will receive \$2,000.

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society is a national, nonprofit organization which nurtures community development by bridging science and technology with traditional values. Through its educational programs, AISES provides opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives to pursue studies in the science, engineering, and technology arenas. AISES' ultimate goal is to be a catalyst for the advancement of American Indians and Native Alaskans as they become self reliant and self determined members of society. For more information about AISES go to [www.aises.org](http://www.aises.org).

Typical student applicants are enrolled to become biologists, natural resources specialists, environmental scientists, geologists, business managers, archaeologists or engineers. Nathaniel Todea, who currently serves on the National NRCS Civil Rights Committee as the American Indian/Alaska Native Male Representative and is the State Hydraulic Engineer in the Utah NRCS State Office, facilitated the scholarship reading and ensured it ran smoothly. Nancy Todea, volunteer, was also there to help out with the scholarship reading.

The AISES organization provided the ranking sheets, copies of college transcripts, personal essays, and letters of recommendation. The students were ranked on the above documents as well as GPA, academic record, career plans, extracurricular activities, leadership, awards, recognition, work experience and overall impressions.

Todea said "I was impressed with the turnout, attendees overall positive comments and I hope participants learned something new about current American Indian issues."

A huge thank you goes out to everyone who helped with the scholarship reading!



2011 AISES Scholarship Readers: Amy Webbink-MT FSA, Andrea Ceartin-MT NRCS, Chuck Gordon-MT NRCS, Denise Wiedenheft-MT NRCS, Holly Johnson-MT FSA, Jennifer Perez Cole-MT FSA, Jennifer Simon-MT FSA, Jeremy Not Afraid-MT NRCS, Joan Louie-MT USFS, Kris Berg-MT NRCS, Libba Olexa-MT FSA, Nancy D. Todea-HUD Retired, Nathaniel Todea-UT NRCS, Seanna Sparks-MT NRCS, and Wendy Williams-MT NRCS.

## Continuous Sign-up for Russian Olive and Saltcedar Control



Russian olive grove located along the Yellowstone River in Park County, Montana.

The Montana NRCS accepts sign-ups throughout the year for Russian olive and Saltcedar control through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). When a ranking period is established, all applications received will be screened and ranked.

NRCS is targeting Big Horn, Carbon, Custer, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Prairie, Rosebud, Treasure, and Yellowstone counties.



Saltcedar in bloom.

Both Russian olive and Saltcedar are extremely invasive to western riparian areas. Once established, Russian olive stands are very tenacious. Russian olive replaces native cottonwoods and willows in wet saline bottomlands. Saltcedar is believed to disrupt the structure and stability of native plant communities and degrades native wildlife habitat by out-competing and replacing native plant species.

Participants will remove Russian olive and Saltcedar from riparian corridors. In addition to the removal of the species, the projects may include; revegetation and control of noxious weeds on the affected acreage. Grazing management practices can also be implemented. For more information about NRCS programs, and controlling Russian olive and Saltcedar on your property, please contact your local NRCS field office. Contact information for your local NRCS office can be found at <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/directory/index.html>.

### *The Earth Team Needs YOU!*

Have you ever been interested in giving back to your community? Would you like to volunteer in an outdoor environment? Then being an Earth Team Volunteer with the Natural Resources Conservation Service might be the thing for you!

The Earth Team is the volunteer workforce of the NRCS, which is part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The NRCS provides technical assistance in regards to natural resource conservation on private lands. Earth Team volunteers play an important role in helping the NRCS provide assistance to local farmers, ranchers, landowners, organizations, and tribes.

The Earth Team Volunteer program is an excellent way to learn about what the NRCS does, and the volunteer experience can be a great addition to resumes and scholarship applications! In order to become an Earth Team volunteer, you must be 14 years of age or older, and you can work part-time or full-time. If you would like to learn more about becoming an Earth Team volunteer, you can check out the Montana NRCS' Earth Team Volunteer homepage at <http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/about/voluntr.html>. You can also stop in at your local NRCS Field Office!

#### *As an Earth Team volunteer, you can provide a wide array of services such as:*

Help field office staff do engineering surveys, lay-outs, and designs

Planning, planting, and monitoring of Plant Materials Center trials

Help put on educational workshops

Clerical services such as filing, office organization, answering phones

Complete range inventories

And numerous other duties!

If you or anyone you know would like to be added to the mailing list for the Montana NRCS' Conservation Pathways Newsletter, please send your name and mailing address to:

USDA-NRCS

Attn: Conservation Pathways  
724 Third Street West  
Hardin, MT 59034

Or Email:

[seanna.sparks@mt.usda.gov](mailto:seanna.sparks@mt.usda.gov)

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### January 2012

Montana Weed Control Association Annual Conference  
January 10-12, 2012; Great Falls, MT  
For more information: 406-684-5590

### March 2012

National American Indian Science and Engineering Fair (NAISEF)  
March 21-24, 2012; Albuquerque, NM  
For more information: <http://www.aises.org>

### April 2012

Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) National Conference  
April 30-May 4, 2012; Cherokee, NC  
For more information: 866-890-7258

### June 2012

Deadline to Sign up for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and  
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)  
June 1, 2012; Statewide  
For more information, contact your local NRCS Field Office

## Tribal Field Office Directory

### Browning Field Office

Phone: 338-3153; FAX: 338-3529  
Blackfeet Tribal Headquarters Serves:  
Blackfeet Reservation  
P.O. Box 1169  
Browning, MT 59417-1169

*District Conservationist*- Anne Stephens,  
Email: [anne.stephens@mt.usda.gov](mailto:anne.stephens@mt.usda.gov)

### Crow Agency Field Office

Phone: 638-9102; FAX: 638-9101  
8645 South Weaver Drive,  
Student Union Building (SUB), Room 205  
P.O. Box 699  
Crow Agency, MT 59022

*District Conservationist*- Jeremy Not Afraid,  
Email: [jeremy.not\\_afraid@mt.usda.gov](mailto:jeremy.not_afraid@mt.usda.gov)

### Fort Belknap Field Office

Phone: 353-8488; FAX: 353-2228  
158 Tribal Way, Suite D 353+last 4  
Harlem, MT 59526

*District Conservationist*- Scott Morton,  
Email: [mailto:scott.morton@mt.usda.gov](mailto:mailto:scott.morton@mt.usda.gov)

*Soil Conservation Technician*- Blake Stiffarm,  
Phone: (406) 353-8350,  
Email: [blake.stiffarm@mt.usda.gov](mailto:blake.stiffarm@mt.usda.gov)

### Lame Deer Field Office

Phone: 477-6494; FAX: 477-8431  
East Boundary Drive  
P.O. Box 330  
Lame Deer, MT 59043-0330

*Tribal Conservationist*- Kathy Knobloch,  
Email: [kathy.knobloch@mt.usda.gov](mailto:kathy.knobloch@mt.usda.gov)

### Pablo Field Office

Phone: 675-2700; FAX: 275-2804  
Tribal Land Department  
42487 Complex Boulevard  
Pablo, MT 59855-0871

*Tribal Conservationist*- Herb Webb ext. 1245,  
Email: [herb.webb@mt.usda.gov](mailto:herb.webb@mt.usda.gov)

### Poplar Field Office

Phone: 768-3566; FAX: 768-3373  
500 Medicine Bear Road  
Box 1027  
Poplar, MT 59255-1027

*Fork Peck Tribal Liaison*- Thomas Beck,  
Email: [tom.beck@mt.usda.gov](mailto:tom.beck@mt.usda.gov)

*Turtle Mountain Tribal Liaison*-  
Paul Finnicum, Phone: (406) 768-3964  
Email: [paul.finnicum@mt.usda.gov](mailto:paul.finnicum@mt.usda.gov)

### Rocky Boy Field Office

Phone: 395-4066; FAX: 395-4382  
98 Veterans Park Rd.  
Serves: Chippewa Cree Tribe  
Rocky Boy, MT 59521

*Chippewa Cree Tribal Technician*-  
Bobby LaSalle,  
Email: [robert.lasalle@mt.usda.gov](mailto:robert.lasalle@mt.usda.gov)

  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA-NRCS  
149 E. Babcock St., Rm 443  
Bozeman, MT, 59715  
[www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov)  
406-587-6811

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