

Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI)

2017 Report of Projects and Activities



Demonstration Projects

Montana Range Days- June 2017

Montana GLCI has been a long-time supporter of Montana Range Days. This premier range education event is Montana's largest venue and started in Jordan in 1977. This event is held annually and rotates across the state to draw in people from all corners of Montana. In 2017, Montana Range Days was held in Red Lodge and hosted by the Carbon Conservation District.

Lake County Grazinglands Soil Health Assessments

This project is centered in Lake County and all data collected and analyzed will take place on private working agricultural lands. A total of 10 landowners have agreed to participate in these soil health assessments. The purpose of the study is to attempt to quantify soil health changes that occur as a result of management-related grazing improvements and on a broad scale with multiple producers. This project is expected to run for 10 years.

The Rumen and the Root: Exploring the Correlation between Herd Efficiency and Soil Health in Grazing Systems

The project includes four producers that represent the typical grazing scenarios in Pondera County. Two producers are located approximately 30 miles east of Conrad, where grazing systems are mainly introduced pasture and a limited amount of native range. The other two producers are located 45 miles west of Conrad, on the Rocky Mountain front, where grazing systems are predominately native range. With a national spotlight on soil health, producers in Pondera County are focusing more and more on this topic. Historically, soil health studies in Pondera County have focused solely on cropping systems, with little to no emphasis on grazing. Producers want to know how incorporating grazing in cropping systems will affect the system, how different grazing strategies affect soil health, and if there is a correlation between soil health and herd efficiency. This project will investigate all

these questions by monitoring four distinctly different grazing systems found throughout Pondera County.

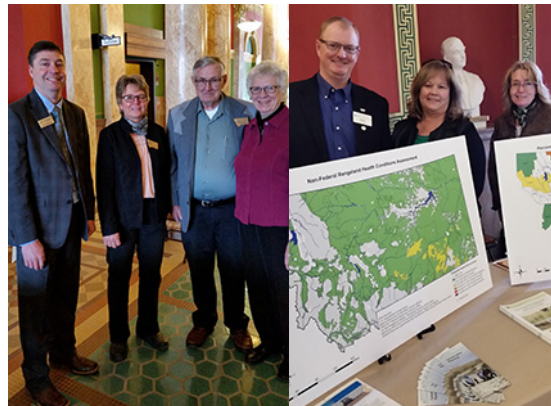
Annual Events and Educational Activities

Winter Grazing Seminar- January 2017

The Winter Grazing Seminar is an annual event, sponsored by the Rangeland Resource Executive Committee and the local conservation district. The event rotates across Montana. In 2017, Valley County Conservation District hosted the grazing seminar in Glasgow.

Rangeland Day at the Capitol Rotunda- February 2017

The first ever Rangeland Day at the Capitol Rotunda was held on Friday, February 17, 2017. The event was hosted by the Rangeland Resources Executive Committee (RREC) and joined by agricultural partners in rangeland resources from across the state. The day was a celebration of rangeland, Montana's largest natural resource, through education and awareness. It was also an opportunity to showcase rangeland's economic, social, and environmental importance to our state.



Pictured left to right: Jay Bodner, Montana Stockgrowers Association and ex-officio Montana GLCI; Diane Ahlgren, RREC; John Hollenback, Montana GLCI and RREC; Carole Hollenback; Kirt Walstad, NRCS and Montana GLCI co-coordinator; Lisa Coverdale, NRCS State Conservationist for Montana; and Nikki Rife, NRCS.

Montana GLCI Steering Committee

Dean Wang, Chairman, Baker Montana Stockgrowers Association

Jim Willis, Vice Chairman, Wilsall Montana Farm Bureau Federation

Bob Lee, Lewistown National Cattleman's Beef Association

John Hollenback, Gold Creek Rangeland Resources Executive Committee

Lon Reukauf, Terry Montana Association of Grazing Districts

Ben Lehfeldt, Lavina American Sheep Industry

Lane Nordlund, Bozeman Media (Nordlund Communications, LLC)

Ron Stoneberg, Hinsdale Montana Association of Conservation Districts

Vacant Society for Rangeland Management

Co-Coordinators

Carla Lawrence, Boyd Dba Carla at the Ranch

Kirt Walstad, Bozeman Natural Resources Conservation Service



Montana Range Tour- September 2017

This annual RREC, Montana GLCI partner, outreach event rotates across the state. In 2017, this event was held in Lewistown and hosted by the Petroleum and Fergus County Conservation Districts.

Get on the Bus! The Soil Health Bus: September 2017.

This bus tour, hosted by the Montana Soil and Water Conservation Society, will leave Billings, MT, and head into North and South Dakota looking at research and on-the-ground improvements in soil health.

Recent News and Activities

Texas Grazing Conference

Bob Lee, member of the Montana GLCI and the National Grazing Lands Coalition, was a featured speaker during the Texas Grazing Conference held this past August in Waco, TX.

The Texas Grazing Land Coalition Presents the
TEXAS GRAZING CONFERENCE
August 29-31, 2017 • Waco, TX

MORNING SESSION

- Wyman Murriger - State Photographer of Texas "The Legacy of the San Antonio Valley"
- Tom Casler - Casler Consulting Washington, D.C. "Conservation and the Farm Bill"

AFTERNOON SESSIONS (CONCURRENT)

Livestock:

- Walt Davis - "How to Not Go Broke Ranching"
- David Crow - "Infrastructure for Intensive Grazing"
- Ken Clayton - "Profitability and Stewardship: Can You Achieve Both?"
- Markham Dossett - "Ranching in Shifting Markets and Unpredictable Weather"

Wildlife:

- Steve Nelle - "Manage, Conserve, Sustain"
- Josh Storm - "Wildlife Ecology on the Storm Ranch"
- John Sewell - "Big Bucks, Little Budget"
- Kelly Reyna, PhD - UNT - "Grazing for Quail"

TOUR
Rocosa Ridge & Flat Top Ranches

REGISTRATION
Registration is \$125 and includes all sessions, the tour, two mixers, and two lunches. For registration, visit the link below.
www.regonline.com/txgrazland2017
A block of rooms have been reserved at the Hilton.
Access to register for those rooms can be found at:
<http://mcaf.ce/ymirlf>

Waco
While in Waco, make time to take the self-guided Magnolia Trail Tour, where you'll visit shops like Magnolia Silos and eat at Chip and Joanna's cafe.
<https://wacoheartofexas.com>

MUSIC BY
Suzanne Dean

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Cherry Creek Ranch Tour

The Cherry Creek Ranch, owned by Lon Reukauf, is currently in a drought situation that Prairie County hasn't seen the like of since 1931. Every time we talked in the past month, Lon would say, "If I'd known it was going to be this bad, I don't think I would have volunteered to host a tour."

But it became an opportunity to have a boldly illustrated conversation about resilience,

planning ahead, the value of conservation, stewardship and doing the best you can with what you have.

The attendees included ranchers, chefs, foodservice professionals, journalists, conservationists, wildlife advocates, researchers, academics...cow people, bird people, fish people, food people, word nerds, radioheads, and on and on. I think each of them walked away with a better understanding and greater respect for the challenges the ranching community faces to produce the food they enjoy.

"What you do during the drought, once it's that dry, really isn't that relevant. It's what you do before and after that grass is dry and dormant that's really going to matter," Lon says.

Photos and writing courtesy of Laura Nelson, owner LCN Communications.



Lon Reukauf, Cherry Creek Ranch, Montana and Regional Environmental Stewardship Award winner for 2016 and member of the Montana GLCI, takes a knee during the tour.



Participants of the Cherry Creek Ranch Tour.



Montana

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