



Picture by Roger Zentis

# Marias River Watershed

## NEWSLETTER

Website: [www.mariasriver.com](http://www.mariasriver.com)

Protecting and Improving The Land and Resources

### Marias Watershed Weed Districts Gearing Up For 2010 Weed Attack

By Stan Huhtala, Toole County Weed Control

Although the Marias River is very pristine and beautiful in form, the river is not free of flaws or problems. The Marias has plenty of noxious weeds or invasive species well established in the riparian zones that weed professionals are working to eliminate from the landscape and are promoting re-vegetation of native species. The river is a fair one, which Captain Meriwether Lewis recognized and named Marias's River after Maria Wood, when the Corps of Discovery passed through this area.

The Chouteau County Weed District and Coordinator Craig Ferris hosted the Spring 2010 Weed District Crew Training on May 26<sup>th</sup> in Fort Benton. Participants underwent training on Noxious Weed Identification, Rules and Regulations, Spill Response, Grizzly Bear Precautions, Labels and Application and other pertinent subjects. This summer Chouteau County will have four employees controlling weeds on MT Dept. of Transportation (MDOT), Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), and Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) lands as well as the Chouteau County road system.



Glacier County, under the leadership of Bill Bandel, Glacier County Road Dept. Supervisor and Weed Coordinator, reports a crew of ten employees, four spray trucks and two off-road spray rigs. Crews will be dealing with Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), MDOT and DNRC Trust Lands and the Glacier County road system, an ambitious endeavor for any crew. Bandel reports \$10,000 per year for biological control agents and Glacier County's commitment to biological control.

Hill County is under the direction of Terry Turner, Hill County Weed Coordinator and supervisor of a crew of ten. They treat invasive species on MDOT, US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MTWFP), US Coast Guard Station and private lands. They, too, have an active biological control program, obtaining additional agents where needed.

Liberty County is headed up by Jim Ghekiere, Weed Coordinator and will have a 5-person crew. This crew will be dealing with MDOT, USBR, BLM, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad. The crew will continue with its' extensive work on Tiber Reservoir lands, monitoring re-growth of the Russian Olive Demonstration Project along the Marias River below Tiber Reservoir. The Liberty County crew has been very active with weed control in the Sweetgrass Hills and tributaries extending out toward the prairie. Biological control has complimented the current weed management program.



#### The Board & Regional Chairs:

- Paul Kronebusch-Chairman
- Barb Cole-CoChairman
- Lawrence Bold
- Roy Doore
- Coo Coo Boggs
- Ramsey Offerdal
- John Rappold

**The next regular MRW Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday July 6 at 1:00pm, Marias River Electric, Shelby**

#### Conservation District Contacts:

- Pondera 406-278-7611 ext. 101
- Glacier 406-873-5752 ext. 101
- Liberty 406-759-5778 ext. 102
- Toole 406-434-5234 ext. 113
- Big Sandy 406-378-2298
- Hill 406-265-6792 ext. 101
- Chouteau 406-622-5627 ext. 101

*This newsletter was compiled and edited by Kody Farkell, PCCD Administrator*

## 2010 Weed Attack Con't...

Toole County has been under the direction of Jim Midboe, Toole County Road Department and Weed District, and continues quality weed control for DOT, USBR, BLM, MTFWP, county road system and private landowner assistance. Six employees continue to attack and control Toole County weed infestations. Biological control is a strategic portion of the county mission of Noxious Invasive Species Management.

Pondera County, under the leadership of Steve Becker, a 30-year veteran weed professional, has 2-3 crew members tackling Pondera County's extensive road system and tributaries all capable of moving or transporting invasive species.

All county weed districts listed above have had direct impact on invasive species on the Marias River and its' tributaries. With advanced technology and equipment, the counties continue to enhance their individual and group efforts in the Marias River Basin. A tremendous amount of expense comes from the coordination involved in the effort.

With well over 100 years of service by these weed professionals, the public can rest assured that the weed problems are being tackled by the best:

Bill Bandel (Glacier) 5 years; Craig Ferris (Chouteau) 12 years; Jim Ghekiere (Liberty) 16 years; Jim Midboe (Toole) 21 years; Terry Turner (Hill) 28 years; and Steve Becker (Pondera) 30 years.

This writer recently completed a thirty-two year career with the BOR...of which 29 years dealt with hands-on experience with the Marias River Basin Weed Management. Looking back at the individual county efforts regarding weed management (back in the early 1980's ) compared to today, great milestones have been reached due solely to the commitment and hard work from weed professionals, able staff, and county and agency dollars . They have struggled through hard times and small budgets to get their fine work completed. Timely dollars from State and Federal funding and money from the Montana Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Trust Fund, along with county funding, have been beneficial for a variety of weed management projects to be successful on the War on Weeds.



## Marias River Watershed Events Update

*By Marlene Moon, MRW Coordinator*

The spring/summer is shaping up to be very busy for the Marias River Watershed. A bank stabilization project at the Pugsley Bridge will be getting under way. This project will involve positioning rock vanes on angle in the river to slow the velocity of the water against the north bank. Design and engineering services will be solicited early summer. Funding for this project comes from the Renewable Resource Grant program through the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). In addition, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will be working on a fishery project in the area that will also enhance the bridge project.

Control of Russian olive infestations on the river is a continuing project. Funding for this phase was received from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for control of infestations downstream.

A summer Youth Float is planned for August 5. Participation is limited to 30 students ages 12-15. The float will take place from Sanford Park to the Pugsley Bridge with stops along the way. Subjects to be discussed include weeds, river dynamics, fisheries and information on Tiber Dam and Lake Elwell, among others. Information on registration and other details will be released in late June.

The public is always invited to attend the quarterly meetings. The next regular quarterly meeting is scheduled for July 6, 2010 at the Marias River Electric building at 1:00 p.m



Pugsley Bridge