



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Landowners urged to plan ahead, acquire permits for stream-modification projects

HELENA, Mont. – Conservation Districts have received an influx of emergency notifications and stream permits due to the flooding of the Yellowstone River, specifically tributaries including Rock Creek Stillwater, East Rosebud, and Rosebud. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation encourages residents who live on or near a river or stream to familiarize themselves with the stream permitting process — including the needed permits before starting a stream project — due to the potential for delays with increased submissions.

“Park Conservation District is responding to high numbers of landowners and residents impacted by the flooding,” said DeWitt Dominick, supervisor for Park Conservation District. “The district is actively engaging landowner input and needs within our community and Upper Yellowstone Watershed. Requests and submittals of emergency notifications as well as the standard 310 joint permit applications are understandably multiplying as the flood waters recede.”

Conservation Districts in Park, Stillwater, Sweetgrass and Carbon Counties reviewed 125 permits and emergency notifications to date between the four impacted counties.

Stream modification projects undertaken as an immediate response to flooding require an emergency notification be submitted to the local Conservation District within 15 days of taking the emergency action.

To qualify as an emergency action, Montana law states the project must be the result of an “*unforeseen event or combination of circumstances that calls for immediate action to*

safeguard life, including human or animal, or property, including growing crops, without giving time for the deliberate exercise of judgement or discretion ...”

“Stillwater Conservation District has been on the ground since the June 13 assessing damage and inspecting emergency notifications submitted by private landowners,” said Sharon Flemetis, District Administrator for the Stillwater Conservation District.

Dewitt went on to say that the conservation district is also conducting site reviews, offering comprehensive updated information, synthesizing potential funding sources, and coordinating state, federal, and county efforts as the community navigates immediate and long-term projects into the future.

Conservation Districts in Montana implement the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act, also known as the 310 Law.

A 310 permit is needed for any non-emergency streambed or streambank modification project. 310 permits can take up to 60 days to be issued; landowners planning a project should contact their local Conservation District well in advance of the planned starting date to get the permitting process started.

For routine projects undertaken every year, such as cleaning out an irrigation diversion, landowners can apply for a Maintenance Permit through their local Conservation District. These permits are good for up to ten years.

“Conservation District staff are proactively responding to permitting needs of the public amidst the record-setting flood event,” said Jason Garber, DNRC Stream Permitting Coordinator. “But we ask the public for patience as they navigate processing the influx of permits and assisting impacted communities.”

For more information on stream permitting, contact your local Conservation District, or the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation at (406) 444-4340. Resources and information on flooding on the Yellowstone River are available online at <http://dnrc.mt.gov/flooding-resources>.

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About DNRC Conservation Districts Bureau: The Conservation Districts Bureau assists Montana’s 58 conservation districts, who provide voluntary programs to empower private landowners to implement conservation on their property. The CDB assists conservation districts in meeting their legal requirements to carry out conservation programs locally and with the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310 Law). The mission of the Bureau is: Empowering Montana’s Conservation Districts to meet their mission through legal and operational support, financial assistance, and professional development.



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