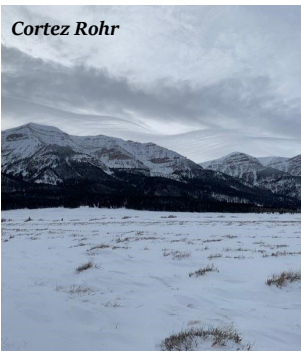




CVA Program Updates

Range Rider & Wildlife Program

The 2022 Range Riding season is just around the corner. Erika is returning as the coordinator and two new folks, David and Taylor, have been hired on as Range Riders. David is currently down in Arizona working for the Elkhorn Ranch, and has experience working in Montana for the Sieben Livestock Company. Taylor grew up on a ranch in New Mexico and is currently finishing up a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation Ecology. We are excited to welcome both to the Valley and look forward to their arrival towards the end of May!



During the 2021 season, we continued working towards our program goals of reducing unconfirmed cattle losses, mitigating conflict, and disseminating information to the community. Range Riders helped monitor cattle for 6 producers, covered around 300,000-acres of country, and reported more than 100 observations on cattle health, infrastructure, etc. Producers reported 7 confirmed grizzly bear depredations, 1 confirmed wolf depredation, and 8 suspected wolf or grizzly depredations. Range Riders helped locate 4 of the confirmed depredations and responded to other suspected losses. Range Riders set up cameras and electric mesh wire fencing to document predator activity and preserve the carcasses until Wildlife Services could respond. Most depredations occurred from August 1 – September 15, which is consistent with previous years and coincides with grizzly bear hyperphagia.

Game cameras, tracking efforts, and community reports helped us understand grizzly bear and wolf populations last season. We collected 88 grizzly bear observations and estimate that 26-29 unique grizzly bears were documented. We also collected 31 wolf observations, from which we estimated 2-3 different packs and 16 unique individuals.

This year, Range Riders will continue to effectively communicate with participants, while working towards mitigating conflicts between wildlife and livestock, and reducing unconfirmed losses of livestock. We will produce Range Rider Reports on a bi-weekly basis to share observations. Wildlife reports from the community are a very valuable addition to our reports, so please consider reporting your wildlife sightings (big or small!) to us this coming season. As always, look out for our red and white '86 Dodge or gold '05 Chevy; we will try to stop and say 'hi' if we see you in the Valley! If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or just want to chat, please feel free to reach out at any time.

-Erika Nunlist, Wildlife Program Coordinator; wildlife@centennialvalleyassociation.org

Wildlife Speaker Series

The Ruby Habitat Foundation, Ruby Valley Watershed Council and Conservation District, Beaverhead Watershed Committee, Big Hole Watershed Committee, Madison Valley Ranchlands Group, Jack Creek Preserve, and CVA are hosting the Wildlife Speaker Series this summer!

CVA is excited to host our friend and local waterfowl expert, Jeff Warren, on **June 8th** at Lima School! Jeff is a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Centennial Valley. He has worked on numerous waterfowl research projects and in 2004, he initiated a demographic study of Lesser Scaup on Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The continental population of scaup reached an all-time low in 2006 after an approximately three-decade decline. The study in the Centennial Valley provided important information on



factors affecting scaup survival and breeding success. CVA will host a community meal at 6pm, with the presentation to follow at 7pm. We hope to see you there!

Announcements

- 🔥 Mark your calendars for a spring applicator training on **April 26th**, 10am-2pm at the Lima Fire Hall. CVA is happy to provide lunch for those in attendance, so please consider RSVPing to Kara at kmaplethorpe@beaverheadcounty.org.
- 🔥 CVA is extremely fortunate to have amazing supporters, including staff, partners, and members, who ensure programs and projects in the Centennial Valley are sustainable and successful in 2022 and into the future. Please consider becoming a member so we can provide our best for the community!
- 🔥 We are searching for a Field Coordinator to join our Team this field season! The full announcement can be found on our [website](#).



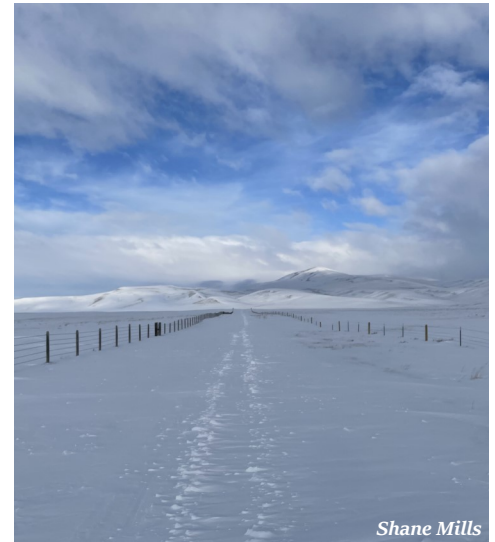
CVA Program Updates (continued)

Invasive Species Management Program

While the Centennial Valley may be (thankfully!) covered in snow in some parts, spring and weed season is just around the corner. CVA is looking forward to having a full weed crew this year, and we'll have some new faces to introduce over the next few months. A full crew, which includes CVA and The Nature Conservancy in Montana staff, will allow us to continue our noxious weed management efforts throughout the Centennial Valley, particularly in areas managed under our Wildlife Habitat and Improvement Program (WHIP) grant with Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks.

We will also be continuing our WHIP reseeding project this year, and plan to reseed at least 10-acres of bare-ground areas around Long Creek with native grasses, forbs, and fescues. Reseeding disturbed, bare-ground areas after herbicide treatment helps prevent invasive species from re-establishing and promotes intact, native plant communities able to support both wildlife and livestock. A big **thank you** to the Montana Native Plant Society (MNPS) for providing additional support and expertise to the reseeding project! MNPS has awarded CVA a grant to purchase additional native plant seed for the Long Creek project, and we will be working with a guaranteed native plant supplier in the coming weeks to ensure we get the seeds ordered early. We will also be monitoring the success of our Monida Hill reseeding efforts, which were completed in 2020. We are looking forward to seeing the vegetation improvements and apply lessons learned to Long Creek!

Location	Date	Time & Meeting Spot
Lima Dam	June 28 th	8:00am @ Old Taft Property
Lima	June 29 th	7:30am @ Lima Rest Area
Big Sheep Creek	June 30 th	8:00am @ Sheep Shearing Pens
Snowline	July 5 th	8:00am @ Snowline Gravel Pit
Monida Hill/Price Peat	July 6 th	8:00am @ Top of Monida Pass
Little Sheep Creek	July 7 th	8:00am @ Wide Spot Before Y
Medicine Lodge	July 26 th	8:00am @ Hansen Creek Turn-Off
Snowline	August 2 nd	8:00am @ Snowline Gravel Pit
Wolverine *CVA Sponsored*	August 9 th	9:00am @ Wolverine Gate
Red Rock Pass *CVA Sponsored*	August 10 th	9:00am @ Top of Pass
Lima Dam *CVA Sponsored*	August 11 th	8:00am @ Below Lima Dam Spillway



Shane Mills

This year, CVA will once again sponsor three Spray Days, in coordination with the Beaverhead County Weed District. We will also be leading four Weed Weeks this summer, which allow us to intensively target noxious weed infestations throughout the Valley. We hope you will be able to join us at one or more community Spray Days this year!

As always, if you have any questions or would like more information about Spray Days, Weed Weeks, or other noxious weed management efforts in the Centennial Valley, please contact Clare Ols, Invasive Species Coordinator, via email at invasiveweeds@centennialvalleyassociation.org or by phone at (708)218-6889.

Water and Drought Awareness Program

We started 2022 off strong, however, since January, the Centennial Valley has not received much moisture to kick us out of severe drought concerns moving into the spring. Earlier this month, the Lakeview SNOTEL site's snow water equivalent was 0% of median. Luckily, a spring snowstorm, which lasted a few days, helped jump the SNOTEL site to 16% of median for snow water equivalent. Community members in Lakeview reported about a foot of snow on the valley floor, while the north side community reported about 4" of snow that blew around with high winds. As a whole, the Jefferson River Basin is at 84% of median for snow water equivalent, and the Red Rock sub-basin is at 80%. As of the start of the day on April 20th, 2022, the SNOTEL sites surrounding the Centennial Valley have the following snow water equivalent percent of median values:



Anne Blackwood

💧 Beagle Springs: 98%	💧 Short Creek: 63%
💧 Clover Meadow: 75%	💧 Tepee Creek: 82%
💧 Divide: 78%	💧 White Elephant: 74%
💧 Lakeview Ridge: 19%	

Please reach out to drought@centennialvalleyassociation.org with any questions or to receive the Water Reports directly in your inbox!

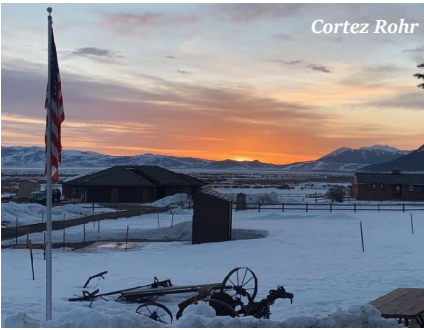
-Kara Maplethorpe, Executive Coordinator

Partner Updates

Stronger Relationships & Collaborative Fundraising

Future West and the Montana Watershed Coordination Council are hosting a capacity-building workshop for local conservation leaders on May 19th, with an optional evening on the 18th. It is open to watershed groups, conservation districts, Tribal government agencies, and municipal governments are invited to attend. The workshop will focus on increasing the sustainability and impact of our work through stronger relationships and collaborative fundraising solutions to achieve local conservation goals. [Registration](#) is \$40 and is limited to 60 people. Erika, Wildlife Program Coordinator, and Kara, Executive Coordinator, will be in attendance to listen and learn to bring new opportunities back to the community. If any of our community partners would like to participate, please reach out to Kara and she will get you registered!

Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge



Return migration of waterfowl and shorebirds on the Refuge has begun to increase slightly, but still far from peak numbers. Contingent on weather conditions, late April-early May is when peak arrival for these birds can be expected to occur. Canada geese, nonetheless, have begun to

establish and defend territories for nesting. Swans are also beginning to establish and defend territories at this time.

Lower Lake water levels have risen significantly in the last two weeks from warm temperatures, and the Refuge will hold them high until it begins its mandatory release on May 15th. High water levels are critical to ensure swans nest high in the event of a sudden warm spell causing snowmelt to flood nests. Elevated mid-spring water levels are also crucial to provide temporary hemi-marsh habitat for return migrating waterfowl and shorebirds before they begin to nest. Recent cold temperatures will slow increasing lake levels until warmer temperatures return.

Summer field season preparations have begun. Browse surveys, invasive and noxious weed spraying, animal surveys, and bluebird nest boxes are slated to be some of this year's projects. The Refuge will plant 2,000 aspen trees in early -mid May as part of its aspen regeneration and establishment goal. The hope for continued precipitation grows in anticipation of the spring sprouting of 56 species of native wildflower seeds that were planted last fall around the headquarters kiosk.

Just a reminder: The State will close Red Rock Creek to all fishing 15 days early this year for Arctic grayling to spawn. Red Rock Creek will be closed from May 1st - June 14th. Elk Springs Creek will be closed to all fishing May 15th - June 15th.

The Refuge invites everyone to view its new website for information at: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/red-rock-lakes>

-Cortez Rohr, Deputy Refuge Manager

Beaverhead County Weed District

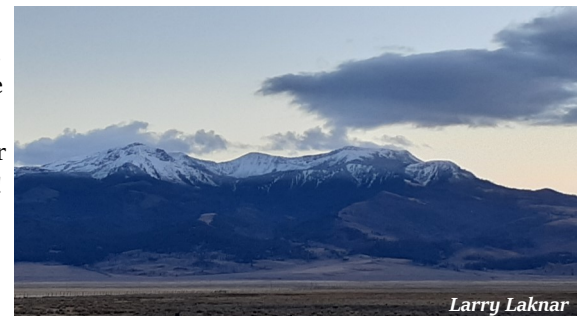
The Weed District ladies have been hard at work this winter and spring! We submitted five cost-share grants, a river corridor grant, and a grant for Dyer's woad management to the Noxious Weed Trust Fund. In early March, Amber and Kara presented the grant proposals to the Trust Fund Council, and we are happy to announce that all of the projects were funded! The Upper Red Rock Cooperative Project was fully awarded, and we are excited to see projects take off this spring, summer, and fall. The cost-share grant for the Upper Red Rock covers commercial application, herbicide, and revegetation costs in the Red Rock River corridor of Dell and Lima, Sage Creek, Snowline, Centennial Valley, and Big/Little Sheep. Landowners receive 100% of the funds awarded, and the Weed District is excited to support local communities in Beaverhead County!

Despite snow and cold last week, spring is really right around the corner. The Weed District will begin preparing for weed season; getting equipment together, herbicide ordered, and crew members hired. As temperatures begin to warm up, whitetop and black henbane will begin to show up on the landscape. These early invaders are best treated as soon as you start seeing them. Herbicide is a viable treatment option, as is hand-pulling in small patches. Spotted knapweed, houndstongue, hoary alyssum, and thistles will begin appearing more readily as spring and summer come to more of a head. In the meantime, if houndstongue is on or around your property, pull or clip old seed head stalks and bag them in a trash bag. This will help reduce the seed bank and spread of this pesky invader for years to come! Bagged houndstongue can be brought to your local dump and disposed of there.

The drought, wildfires, and increased recreation across the state has created an environment for new invaders to grow and be successful in. During the summer, keep your eyes peeled for rush skeletonweed, Dyer's woad, and yellow starthistle. These species are priority species in Montana and Beaverhead County. The Weed District has a \$50 bounty for these species that are found in locations they have not occurred previously. If you suspect you have found one of these invaders, please send a picture, as well as a GPS location, to the Weed District so we can verify and provide prompt treatment!

Finally, the Weed District is excited to host an applicator training in Lima on April 26th with the Centennial Valley Association and MSU Extension! Topics include drought in weed management, rangelands, water quality and soil impact on herbicide performance, and a houndstongue and Canada thistle biocontrol update. Four (4) credits are available for multiple license types, including private, right-of-way, and regulatory applicators.

If you have questions, concerns, or need help with weed management efforts/planning on your property, please contact the office at (406)683-3790 or come in and visit!



Partner Updates (continued)

Bureau of Land Management

The BLM has plans to repair the dams on the Monida Creek Ducks Unlimited Wetlands this summer. Two dikes, each approximately 1,000' long were constructed in the summer of 2003 at the high water mark of the normal pool for Lima Reservoir. Wave action from Lima Reservoir over the years has cut into the back side of the dams (photos bottom). The contract will soon be out for bids with a plan for the work will be completed between August-October 2022. These ponds have successfully reared Trumpeter Swans the last few seasons. In 2021, 4 cygnets hatched and in July, 3 cygnets were still surviving (photo right). Due to ongoing drought conditions and anticipated construction, no water will be held this summer. If you have questions or would like more info you can contact Kelly Bocking, Wildlife Biologist at the BLM Dillon Field Office, at (406)683-8018.



Jumping into Spring with Pollinators in the Ruby Valley

Despite a lovely spring snowstorm, Ruby Valley Conservation District (RVCD) is gearing up for warmer weather by kicking off our pollinator initiative for the year. The initiative started last year as a collaborative effort between RVCD, MSU-Extension, Twin Bridges and Sheridan Future Farmers of America, and Jackson's Garden. Our goal is to educate the community about the importance of creating and maintaining healthy pollinator habitat for the benefit of Montana's agricultural and horticultural landscape.

Pollinators enable 75% of the world's flowering plants and 35% of our food crop to reproduce. Native pollinators not only provide important ecosystem services that enable our survival, but they also play a critical role in supporting native plant and animal communities. To date, scientists have identified 450 species of native bees in Montana, with the actual number estimated to be nearly 1,000. Montana is also home to the largest number of bumble bee species in the country. With factors including habitat loss, lack of food resources, climate change, and improper pest management practices, many species of native bees are seeing population declines. Pollinator gardens can help to counteract population decline by providing ample forage and habitat for pollinators throughout the year.

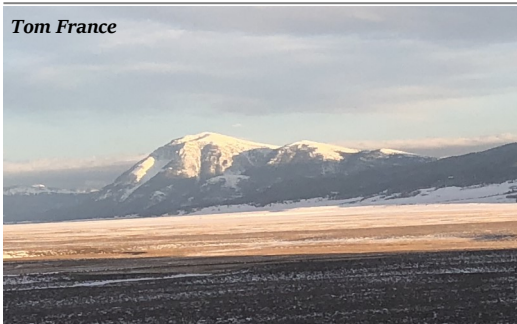


Audra Bell

Overcoming tough conditions, RVCD set up three demonstration gardens last year with the help of our partners and volunteers. Through these demonstrations, we hope to encourage and educate the public about how they can add pollinator habitat to their own gardens. This year, we have already added several trees and shrubs to our Jackson's Garden site, worked with local high schools to build wooden bee houses for native bees, and will soon be spreading pollinator seed mix with elementary school students at our Sheridan and Twin Bridges FFA gardens.

So, what can you do to help out the pollinators in your own garden? You can plant native trees and shrubs, use a mix of plants that bloom at different times of the year, reduce or eliminate chemical use, provide a small amount of water for pollinators in a shallow dish, leave dead tree trunks or leaves in place to provide habitat, and support land conservation and pollinator initiatives! RVCD even has FREE pollinator seed mixes you can use to start your own garden. Reach out to info@rvcd.org to claim yours!

Tom France



Madison Valley Ranchlands Group

Do you have a flexible and proactive grazing plan for the land under your management? Remember, true planning leaves space for unanticipated challenges. Land stewards should have a minimum of three (3) possible scenarios for the grazing season. With the drought cycle the west, including Montana, is currently following, remember that it takes at least 3 years of careful management for the range to fully recover from a ONE year drought.

-Linda Owens, Project Director

Partner Updates (continued)

University of Utah's Taft-Nicholson Center

Carol Bergstrom



The Taft-Nicholson Center will be open and back in full force for the 2022 season. Our campus should be bustling, as we will again be sharing the Centennial Valley with our constituents. We will welcome six artists, one after the other, for the Artist-in-Residence program. Faculty Fellows visiting from the University's Salt Lake Campus will occupy the campus in the month of July, and after a two year drought we will have a full slate of instructors and students

starting in early June. We are very excited to also invite our Centennial Valley neighbors back onto campus to join in various events throughout the summer. Stay tuned!
-Carol Bergstrom

Beaverhead Watershed Committee

We're continuing to work with Red Rock irrigators to replace flumes and improve water measurement. The Grasshopper Creek mine tailings project is moving along, and we'll apply for DNRC funds this spring to start construction. Cornell Park is moving along. The environmental assessment is complete, and the public comment period is open. The plan is to transfer the property to FWP to be added to their fishing access site program. They'll pay for improvements to the park, including landscaping, a new parking lot and boat ramp, latrine, and restoration of the stream banks.

We'll be posting drought and water management newsletters throughout the spring and summer to track flow and regulations. We're also working through the Conservation District as part of a collaborative in Beaverhead County, working with a diverse partnership to find shared interests on public land in the county, specifically addressing wilderness study areas and similar designations. We hope to come to an agreement on what should be done with these lands, and make recommendations to our elected representatives. We're starting with Hidden Pasture WSA.

-Zach Owen

Shane Mills



To preserve traditional ranching as a way of life in the Centennial Valley, and to maintain quality open space, wildlife habitat, water quality, and wildlife migration corridors as they exist today for future generations.

2022 Safety Reminder

Here are some friendly reminders as you plan your summer adventures in the Centennial Valley:

- 💧 Always be Bear Aware: be alert, make noise, travel in a group, and carry bear spray. Bears are not only in the forest, but the sagebrush as well!
- 💧 Bring a spare tire (or two!) and the necessities to change a flat tire and always enter the Valley with a full tank of gas.
- 💧 Have extra food, water, blankets, etc. in case of an overnight breakdown. Even on warm summer nights, the weather changes unexpectedly!
- 💧 Carry a First Aid Kit and note that Verizon is the most reliable cellular carrier, but only on the north side.
- 💧 SLOW DOWN on the dirt roads!

Enjoy the summer and reach out if you have any questions!

Friends of the CVA

CVA strives to build and utilize working relationships with numerous agencies and organizations, such as:

- 💧 Federal, State, and County Agencies like the Beaverhead County Weed District, Red Rock Lakes NWR, Bureau of Land Management, Montana DNRC, and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
 - 💧 The Nature Conservancy
 - 💧 Taft-Nicholson Center
 - 💧 Future West
- 💧 Heart of the Rockies/High Divide Collaborative
 - 💧 USFWS Partners Program
- 💧 Montana Watershed Coordination Council
 - 💧 Cross Charitable Foundation
 - 💧 Greater Yellowstone Coalition
 - 💧 Defenders of Wildlife
 - 💧 Livestock Loss Board
- 💧 Western Sustainability Exchange
- 💧 Missouri Headwaters Partnership
- 💧 Friends of Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the Centennial Valley
 - 💧 Fish, Wildlife and Parks WHIP Program
 - 💧 Montana Native Plant Society
 - 💧 Western Landowners Alliance
 - 💧 And Many Others!

CVA Board Members

Yvonne Martinell, Chairwoman	Scott Huntsman
Peggy Dulany & Andrew Anderson (Proxy)	Ed Wolfe
Kevin Crowe & Tassi Duffner (Proxy)	Mel Montgomery
Jerry Scheid (Advisory)	Mark Bergstrom (Advisory)
Jim Berkey (Advisory)	Bill West (Advisory)

CVA Committees

Weeds: Scott Huntsman
 Wildlife: Yvonne Martinell, Bill West
 Hunting: Jerry Scheid, Scott Huntsman



CENTENNIAL VALLEY ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Name(s): _____

Business/Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

*How would you like to receive information from CVA? **Note** To assist with mailing costs, please add an additional \$10 to your membership if choosing the "Mail" or "Both" option.*

Email

Mail

Both

Membership Dues (check one):

Individual Community Member or Interested Party: \$20

Individual Centennial Valley Landowner: \$30

Family: \$50

Business/Organization: \$100

What issues or projects are of special interest to you?

Additional amount enclosed for postage, projects, and matching grants?

Please remit to:

Centennial Valley Association
c/o Yvonne Martinell
PO Box 240077
Dell, MT59724
