

Quarter 1
January-March 2026

The Steward

BROADWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Inside this issue:

Welcome BSWC new member	2
Annual Ag Appreciation Dinner	3
Beaver Creek	4
Drought Resiliency Report	5-6
NRCS/ FSA Updates	7
BCD Rentals	8
310 Permitting Process	9
Board Meetings	9

Hello Broadwater County Community! It's time for the Broadwater Conservation District newsletter, *The Steward*! The purpose of our newsletter is to inform the community of all BCD endeavors, community events and projects, and to celebrate conservation efforts throughout the community.

This edition of *The Steward* provides a look into what the Broadwater Conservation District has been up to over the months of January, February and March. BCD is very excited to be sending out another newsletter to inform you of our endeavors and exciting new information! With all that we do, we always try to put into practice our motto "Local Common-sense Conservation".

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

BCD Welcomes our new AmeriCorps Member

We welcomed a new Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) AmeriCorps member in January. Ksenia Smart who will be serving with BCD for a ten-month term. Ksenia comes to us from Maine and has been excited to learn about and see Montana. Hosting a BSWC member provides the conservation district with capacity to get a lot accomplished. In return we strive to provide as many opportunities as possible to explore and learn about natural resources, conservation, education and outreach and agriculture.




Her first experience
electrofishing on Deep Creek

Ksenia has jumped right in and has been working diligently on gathering data and putting together a draft of a watershed restoration plan for the Beaver Creek watershed near Winston, MT. She was able to experience electrofishing on Deep Creek with our local FWP fish biologist Coltan Pipinich. Assisting with netting shocked fish, counting, weighing, measuring and clipping their caudal fin. She has also had a chance to experience a day in the life of a sheep rancher with our board member Kelly Ingalls, and all things calf/cow with Denise Thompson.

In the first three months of her term she has also been able to attend a number of conferences and training events. She attended the Montana Association of Conservation District Soil Symposium, Montana Environmental Education Association training, a grant management workshop, a conference on Indian Education for All as well as training provided by AmeriCorps and Big Sky Watershed Corps on education, outreach and service.

Annual Ag Appreciation Dinner



2026
ANNUAL AG APPRECIATION DINNER
 FEBRUARY 21ST \$25/PERSON
 WATSON EVENT CENTER
 290 LIGHTNING BARN RD
 5PM SOCIAL HOUR
 KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DR JEFF MOSLEY-MSU
 FFA SILENT AUCTION & DINNER TO FOLLOW
 HONORING THE PEOPLE WHO PROTECT AMERICA'S LANDS, WATERS AND WORKING LANDSCAPES

Broadwater Conservation District held our Annual Ag Appreciation Dinner on Saturday February 21st. This event is always well attended and this year we hosted 237 people for a prime rib dinner. Our keynote speaker this year was MSU professor Jeff Mosley. His topic "Things are different in Montana" highlighted that things are different, but Montana farmers and ranchers must keep their value in being empathetic to newcomers, reaching out to help them understand our fragile land conservation ethic.

This year BCD awarded Chuck and Carole Plymale with our Good Neighbor Award. The Plymales represent the epitome of keynote speaker Jeff Mosley's commentary

For Ag Business of the Year BCD recognized Headwaters Livestock Auction. Brittany Jones accepted the award.

The district also recognized FWP Fish Biologist Ron Spoon who retired October 1, 2025 for his 35 years of stewardship in Broadwater County.



Attend a Board Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm

Bringing Back the Flow: Beaver Creek Update



BCD applied for and was awarded a DEQ grant to develop a Watershed Restoration Plan for the Beaver Creek Watershed. Ksenia has been pulling information and data together. We started with a bullet point outline and have been putting the information into the various sections. With her GIS skills Ksenia has been creating maps to show the visual of some of the information. We have been sharing our progress with DEQ and DNRC to get their input as well. So far, we have the first 5 sections fairly well drafted. A landowner meeting is scheduled for April to share our draft progress and to gather their input.

Beaver Creek Watershed Restoration Plan 2026 Draft

Section 1: Introduction & Background

1.1 Watershed Restoration Planning.

1.2 Nine Key Elements

1.3 Beaver Creek WRP Goals

Section 2: Watershed Characteristics

2.1 Geography

2.2 Climate Hydrogeology

2.4 Soils

2.5 Land Cover

2.6 Land Ownership

2.7 Land Management

Section 3: Natural Resources and Resource Use

3.1 Monitoring Efforts

3.2 Agriculture and Irrigation

3.3 Fisheries and Aquatic Life

3.4 Riparian Areas and Wetlands

3.5 Forest

3.6 Mining

Section 4: Water Quality Conditions and Impairments

4.1 Flow

4.2 Metals

4.3 Sedimentation

4.4 Temperature

4.5 Habitat Alteration and Flow Regime Modification

4.6 Nutrients

4.7 Load Reductions

Section 5: Past Projects & Historic Context

5.1 Natural Resource & Conservation Service (NRCS) Projects

5.2 Forest Service Projects

5.3 310 Permits & Stream Work

5.4 County Roads Department Work



Back in 2016, Big Sky Watershed Corps Member Katie Mumford created what is known as the Broadwater County Drought Resiliency Report. This report was created to keep track of how our county is doing with drought resilience. Informing the community of precipitation, soil moisture, temperature, streamflow, snowpack, and ground & reservoir water levels data throughout the year. This ensures we are as prepared as we can be for the upcoming year by taking proactive measures, if needed, to mitigate the negative impacts of drought on our water supplies, agriculture, ecosystems, and overall societal well-being by water conservation measures and land management practices. This report includes a 26 page informational overview to help us understand why the data BCD tracks is relevant to the Drought Resiliency Report. In addition, BCD will be sending out a quarterly report that evaluates the most recent monthly data to help inform all of Broadwater County's drought resiliency throughout 2026.

The following page has the first Broadwater County Quarterly Drought Resiliency Report for 2026! Hope you enjoy and find the information useful! To view the full report, please visit our website at broadwatercd.org.

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Broadwater County Drought Resiliency Report

January, February, March

Temp. Averages

January: 45.3 ° F

February: 39.8 ° F

F

March: 34.8 ° F

Spring Outlook: Drought forecasted to expand in US West, parts of Plains.

A transition from La Nina to ENSO-neutral is expected in the next month, with ENSO neutral favored through May-July 2026.

Did you know?

The 2 Montana highest recorded temps of 117 degrees July 20, 1893 in Glendive and July 5, 1937 at Medicine Lake.

Broadwater County Drought Conditions

44th

driest February on record, over the past 132 years

0.32 inches

BELOW normal

(drought.gov)



Based on the U.S. Drought Monitor, Broadwater County currently has a D1 classification or is considered "Moderate Drought". This means Broadwater County is in the first of four drought categories.

13th

driest year to date over the past 132 years

(January - February)

2026)

0.88 inches

BELOW normal

(drought.gov)



Canyon Ferry still operating UNDER capacity

KAF - Thousand Arce-Feet *Median - Average Reservoir Storage* *Capacity- Gross Volume of water that can be stored

in the reservoir*						
Canyon Ferry Reservoir						
Date	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Median (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)	Current % Capacity	Last Year % Capacity
Jan 31, 2026	1458.1	1415.2	1473.8	2043	77.3%	78.9%
Feb 28, 2026	1437.3	1402.4	1451.8	2043	76.20%	74.3%
Mar 31, 2026	1488.9	1453.3	1453.8	2043	78.90%	77.0%

Broadwater County Snowpack

Month	Boulder Mountain		Tizer Basin	
	Snow Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Snow Depth (in)	SWE (in)
January	36	11.3	15	4.2
February	43	13.3	16	4.8
March	49	16.2	8	2.7

SWE =Snow Water Equivalent

As we begin the year, lets continue to remain strong stewards of the land and prepare to be more DROUGHT RESILIENT as we raise our crops, provide food for others, tend to our critters, our gardens, and responsibly use the natural resources that surround us. The Drought Resiliency Report will be included in our quarterly newsletter and can be found on our website, www.broadwatercd.org. If you would like to receive BCDs quarterly newsletter, please visit our website and sign up today!

NRCS

NRCS continues to accept applications for the Regenerative Pilot Program for 2027 funding year.

This pilot program addresses whole-farm resource concerns through support for voluntary regenerative agriculture conservation plans. It puts American farmers first as a part of the solution to Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) by supporting access to American-grown whole foods, critical to addressing the chronic disease crisis nationwide.

Townsend Service Center
Natural Resources Conservation Service
(406) 266-4253

Montana FSA Updates/Deadlines

Montana FSA Program Dates & Deadlines

USDA Broadwater County Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers of the following FSA dates and deadlines. Contact your local FSA office for assistance.

March 31, 2026: Deadline to apply for Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Seed Cotton, Sesame seed and Wheat.

April 17, 2026: Enrollment for General CRP will run from March 9, 2026, through April 17, 2026.

April 17, 2026: Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program enrollment period closes

April 30, 2026: Deadline to apply for Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) Stage 1 and Stage 2

May 25, 2026: Office Closure for the Federal Holiday: Memorial Day

May 31, 2026: Deadline to apply for Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for corn, cotton, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans sunflower seed

***Note: The Acreage Reporting Date for Spring Alfalfa Seed, all other spring seeded crops, Perennial Forage, Hemp, Grazing acreage and CRP acres is 15 days before the onset of harvest or grazing, or July 15, whichever is earlier.**

Broadwater County FSA Office

Office Hours:

Tuesdays & Wednesdays

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Contact:

Amber Amsbaugh CED

(406) 266 - 4253 ext 2

amber.amsbaugh@usda.gov

Broadwater Conservation District Community Rentals

Electric Fencing

BCD has 3 sets of electric fencing that can be rented. It is \$5 per day to rent. The specifications of a set of electric fencing is listed below:

- **Speedrite S500 Solar Powered Fence Charger**
 - Powers up to 48 km / 30 miles, 100 acres of fence
- **Speedrite Extreme Poly Wire 800 meter**
 - 2640 ft
- **Speedrite Wire Spooler**
- **Pigtail 34" white**
- **Speedrite Bungy Gate 11' - 23' wide**

Tree Planter

BCD has a tree planter that is loaded onto a trailer. You will need a 2" ball and a 6 - prong round or 4 - pin flat plug-in to haul. Will need at least a 40 HP tractor to pull the planter. Tractor needs a 3 pt hitch.

- \$0.04 per tree up to 1,000 trees
- \$0.02 per tree over 1,000 trees

Note: This tree planter is over 20 years old

Fabric Layer

Fabric Layer - \$0.01 per foot

ATV Broadcast Seeder

145 lb capacity 12V Broadcast Seeder designed to be mounted on an ATV. Adjustable spread with of 5 to 45 feet. Included is a wireless on/off remote. Rental fee is \$10 per day with a \$100 deposit.

MSU Extension: NO - TILL DRILL RENTAL

Broadwater County MSU Extension is offering county residents a NO - TILL DRILL for lease.

NO-TILL DRILL SPECS:

- **Great Plains 1006 10-foot drill width with 7.5 in spacing**
- **Legume/Small Seed Box**
- **Grass Seed Agitator**
- **At least 75 horsepower tractor required**
- **\$20 per acre or a minimum of \$400. Acreage is determined using the acre meter on the machine.**
- **\$500 security deposit and signed lease agreement are required to hold dates. Deposit is returned after use and inspection by the County Extension Agent or authorized representative.**
- **Lessee must provide transportation for the drill from the Broadwater County Fairgrounds to site of use. It must be towed by tractor or 3/4 ton truck not to exceed more than 20 mph. The leasee must provide the hitch and hitch pin. A light adapter and overwidth signs can be provided if needed.**
- **If drill is returned uncleaned, a \$50/hr charge will be assessed to clean it.**

Please call the MSU Extension Office at (406)266-9242 for more information
<https://www.montana.edu/extension/broadwater/cropsandlivestock/greatplainsnotilldrill.html>

310 Stream Permitting: It's Free, Easy, and the Law

Planning to do work in or near the banks of a perennial stream? You'll need a 310 permit! This permitting process helps protect our local stream and rivers.

Activities subject to permit include, but are not limited to:

- channel changes
- clearing brush or trees along the stream or river
- boat ramps
- roads crossing creeks
- new diversions
- rip rap & stream bank protection
- dams or reservoirs

It's simple and free- obtain your permit easily through our website or by stopping by the Conservation District Office. In case of emergency action, please notify the Broadwater CD via an emergency form within 15 days. Learn more about the 310 process on our website.

Be advised that you are in violation of state law if you perform any of these activities without obtaining a 310 permit. **310 permits are free of charge and are generally valid for one year after the date of issuance.**

BCD Monthly Board Meetings

For those of you who may be interested in learning more about what Broadwater Conservation District is doing within the community and how the Board of Supervisors works, please don't hesitate to join us at our monthly Board Meetings as they are open to the public! Our Board Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. We would love for you to join! Now with a virtual option: Online: Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#) Meeting ID: 271 090 393 348 1 Passcode: iM35PG9S



<https://broadwatercd.org/>



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broadwatercd@macdnet.org



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BroadwaterCD



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[broadwaterconservation](https://www.instagram.com/broadwaterconservation)