

MAY 2022

# THE POSTRIDER

MARIAS RIVER LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION

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In our area, the drought continues. Fortunately, some places did get some rain. Here is the latest map. Montana State Library publishes monthly maps of moisture status by county.

May 10, 2022

(Released Thursday, May, 12, 2022)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

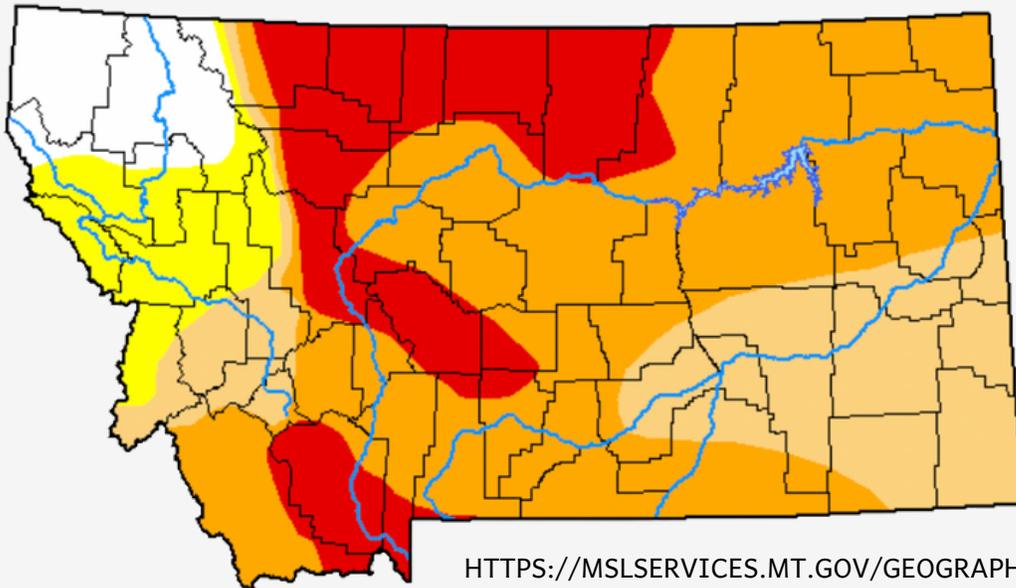
Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	6.93	93.07	85.40	65.28	19.10	0.00
Last Week 05-03-2022	6.93	93.07	85.40	65.54	19.06	0.00
3 Months Ago 02-08-2022	8.15	91.85	89.22	85.89	46.90	7.64
Start of Calendar Year 01-04-2022	7.36	92.64	89.33	86.35	53.93	13.87
Start of Water Year 09-28-2021	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	65.68	21.91
One Year Ago 05-11-2021	12.37	87.63	66.62	33.97	15.71	0.00

### Intensity

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

## DROUGHT?



[HTTPS://MSLSERVICES.MT.GOV/GEOGRAPHIC.../MAPS/DROUGHT/](https://mslservices.mt.gov/geographic.../maps/drought/)

# STEPHEN VANTASSEL

Vertebrate Pest Specialist - Montana Dept of Agriculture

## POCKET GOPHER PRESENTATION



### MAY 26TH - 1PM (THURSDAY)

MARIAS VALLEY COLF COURSE CLUB HOUSE

The **Marias River Livestock Association** is hosting a Pocket Gopher Presentation on Thursday, May 26th at 1 p.m. at the **Marias Valley Golf Course Club House**. Come early and order a no-host lunch from the grill at the Club House.

**Stephen M. Vantassel** will discuss pocket gopher habitat and management, He will then provide a hands-on demonstration on how to successfully trap, poison with a hand probe, and manage the pest with a burrow builder at an actual site with a pocket gopher infestation. Mr. Vantassel will also talk about the Richardson Ground Squirrels or "gophers". Those in attendance will have the opportunity to earn pesticide education credits or applicator points.

**Stephen M. Vantassel** has held the position of Vertebrate Pest Specialist for the Montana Department of Agriculture since May 2015 (<https://agr.mt.gov/Vertebrate-Pests>). He has over 30 years of experience in the wildlife control industry covering private, institutional, and governmental areas. He founded and ran Wildlife Removal Service, Inc., a vertebrate pest control company in Springfield, MA (sold in 1998). His experience includes handling conflicts with squirrels, moles, voles, birds, snakes, beaver, raccoons, skunks, and more. Between 2004 and 2014, he managed the Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management (ICWDM.org) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His efforts led it to receive over 1 million visitors a year hailing from over 130 countries. Stephen is a Certified Wildlife Control Professional (CWCP™) and Associate Certified Entomologist (ACE™). Stephen has published scores of articles and several books on various aspects of wildlife damage management, including The Wildlife Damage Inspection Handbook, 3rd ed. He is passionate about helping the public resolve wildlife conflicts in a responsible and effective manner.

#### Vertebrate Pest Control Bulletins

<https://agr.mt.gov/Vertebrate-Pests>

#### Vertebrate Pest Control Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZjuOhPrQ07tiLsIF04Ccag/videos>





**Although many things have changed in the agriculture industry, one thing remains the same. Farmers and ranchers are the backbone of America and are what keeps America fed.**

I was born in Havre, Montana in 1929 and had one brother and two sisters. I am the last one. My wife Sunie Lou and I had 3 girls and 1 boy. Bob, the youngest lives with his family on his ranch near the home ranch. I also have Lots of grandkids, nieces, and nephews.

**When talking with 92-year-old Earl Thompson, he told me he had been ranching all his life. Here is his story:**

I started mowing hay with horses when I was 12 or 13 years old. It was a lot slower with horses. My dad used to hire guys for \$1 a day including room and board. We had 2 mowing machines and would stack hay with a Jayhawk. (This was a device used for stacking the hay, made of wooden teeth and planks, also called an overshot).

**We only started** with about 400 acres. We planted and bound oats to feed to the calves. We Hauled hay and stacked it loosely. It wasn't until I was about 17 that we got a baler and baled hay to feed the cattle. We had summer school, which I liked very much. Jokingly he said, "The nice part of it was that it was in the summer and that meant less work at the ranch."

The school up there ran for 100 years when finally, the school busing ruined it. Some folks would get mad at the school district, then bus them to town, then pretty soon we didn't have any kids. While attending Whitlash school we had a cart and horse and traveled that way in the summertime. Then when the weather got bad, the folks would take a team and sled and that's how we got there.

**As we got older**, there was usually a big dance in Whitlash every other week. Lots of Canadians came down for this. A lot more was going on then, than there is nowadays. It's a pretty dead area now. As soon as we got television, it seemed like that really ruined the neighborhood. We used to have surprise card parties and if you couldn't figure out where the party was you could almost guess it was going to be at your house. These were always in the wintertime. The storekeeper would surprise the host by driving in blowing his horn with a truck full of nail kegs that we used for seats.

**Remembering some exciting times:**

**My grandparents** had a sheep ranch north of Gold Butte, running about 1000 sheep. I used to like to go down there and help lamb. They had a border collie dog named Jack. When they went to gather the sheep and put them in the shed, Jack would walk across the sheep's backs until just in front of the shed door when he would drop down on the ground and bite one of the lead sheep on the hock. The lead sheep would surge ahead into the shed with the herd following and flowing around Jack as he crouched on the ground. One time this guy and I were picking up lambs when I was about 7. He let the team of horses run down a slope and fell off. He shot up between the horses as they ran and dragged him for about 1/2 mile while he was underneath the wagon. He was between the front wheels and had his arm over the tongue. I was on top all this time as they ran towards the house. Once there, I jumped off and dragged him out from underneath the wagon, and ran to the house for help. Luckily, he was only scraped and bruised up!

**Gee gosh**, thinking back we had a lot of runaways. A team of horses would take off with no stopping them. They would usually at some point get tired and come back. The last time I rode a horse was about 5 - 6 years ago when I would go up to the ranch to help Bob. I'm getting kind of old to be doing this horse business anymore. While growing up my kids raised about 30 - 40 sheep. That was the best thing that ever happened to them. We never gave them any money; they earned their own with the lambs and the wool that they sold. They kept track of everything, and it was a very good learning experience.

**During the bad winter of 1975**, we were calving. We had Hereford cattle and started calving about the 1st of March. We had around 3 feet of snow on the level and the cows all got sunburned bags. My wife and I used to go down to the barn at 6 am. She would peel potatoes and place them in cold water on top of the heating stove. We wouldn't get back from the barn till around 11 pm spending all our time suckling calves and taking care of sunburned cows and feeding. Our barn was quite away from the house and took about 20 minutes to walk down there. The snow was deep and about 1 trip a day was about all you could stand. Later we started using black bulls, and that was the start of our black Angus herd.

**The ranching future** is plum nuts. I go to stockyard sale about every other week and the price of a machinery is terrible along with fuel. We bought a John Deere tractor for haying, and it was \$130,000. The machinery today makes it easier, but no matter how you look at it, in some ways it's just as hard as it was back then. I asked him what his life is like now that he is retired. He said, "pretty dull"! I have a granddaughter that is 40 years old, and she wants to attend school in Montana and needs to be here for a while for residency studying to be a pharmacist. Occasionally I wash the dishes, she keeps me company. Wintertime is really slow here. My wife (Sunie Lou) passed away on January 18th a year ago. She was president of the cattlemen for one year. She was a worker, always doing a lot and a big help. I moved to Lewistown about 14 years ago. It was a pretty good town till Covid came. I really don't have any hobbies to speak of and I am not sure what I will do this summer. The community has kind of went backward where I live now. You hardly know your neighbors anymore. Where I live there are a lot of 5-to-20-acre plots. This is a pretty good agriculture country, but you can't do a lot with a 20-acre plot but raise a damn horse. You can't feed America on horsemeat.



**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK - (406) 444-2045**

Everyone benefits from programs funded by per capita fees. Livestock producers benefit from programs to monitor animal health, monitor and restrict livestock imports, track animal movements, prevent and investigate livestock theft, and manage predators

**PER CAPITA RATES**

Cattle	\$2.29
Horses & Mules	\$5.85
Swine	\$0.78
Sheep and Goats	\$0.54
Poultry.	\$0.05
Bees	\$0.41
Llamas and Alpacas.	\$9.73
Bison	\$6.38
Domestic Ungulates (alternative Livestock)	\$26.33
Ratites	\$9.73



# BEAR MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

**Marias River Livestock Association Bear Management Update**  
**Wesley Sarmiento, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks**

**MAY 10, 2022**

So far (knock on wood), the 2022 season has been relatively quiet in terms of bear problems. The Conrad office has only received four bear complaints this year, which is down from previous spring seasons. Most notably in the area, a male grizzly was reported entering an old, open grain bin north of Dunkirk. The bear has not returned since and was likely a wandering due to the breeding season.

Hopefully, bear complaints remain quiet into the summer months, although just like ranchers and farmers, bear managers welcome precipitation, since bear problems tend to decrease as precipitation increases. If we remain in drought there is a higher possibility of a failed berry crop in July and August, which would likely translate to bears looking for non-natural foods to meet their nutritional requirements. In good berry years, bear problems decrease in late summer as the omnivores gorge on chokecherries and serviceberry. In bad berry years, the bears are forced to roam wider and come closer to people to find food, mainly from grain spills, but also garbage, pet food, birdfeeders, and apple trees. Fortunately, the snowpack is good, so rivers should flow well into summer providing those berry bushes the moisture they need to produce. Keep your fingers crossed that we get plenty of rain – for the sake of farmers, ranchers, and bear managers.

Nonetheless, if there are bear problems, we will be there along with USDA to prevent and respond to complaints. With a grant from Safari Club International, a pro-bear-hunting organization, we have been able to hire a full-time conflict prevention person – Erin Fenger – who is originally from the Sweet Grass Hills. Erin’s main role is to haul away naturally killed livestock in areas with heavy bear presence to prevent the bruins from coming near homes and herds. After the calving season, carcass hauling slows down, so Erin will help with electric fencing, education, and fabricating bear-resistant grain bin doors. Although bear-damaged grain bin doors are only reported once or twice a year, it will still be a good service to provide producers. Prevention efforts will be focused on areas where bear problems are most likely. Beyond that, Erin is scheduled to participate in Toole County Range Days on June 20-22 and National Night Out in Shelby on August 2nd, so stop and say hello if you get a chance.

**Please keep our contact information handy and let us know how we can help you to better prevent bear conflicts from occurring or help you deal with the conflicts that do happen**

@reallygreatsite

**Wesley Sarmiento - 406-450-1097 Fish Wildlife & Parks**

**For livestock loss - Skippy Sims at 406-289-0492 USDA Wildlife Services**



# 45TH ANNUAL RANGE DAYS



The 45th Annual Montana Range Days will be hosted by **Toole County Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service** on June 20-22, 2022. Shelby High School Ag Educator, **Thad White** said, “We are excited to have hundreds of students and adults in Shelby and back out on the range to learn about Montana’s largest natural resource, rangeland!”

“**Montana Range Days** is an excellent way for anyone ages 4-99 to learn more about the land that surrounds us all. It’s a way for professionals to share their knowledge and pass it on to the next generation of agriculture producers and current producers to learn more. It’s also a way to understand how ranchers interact with the environment and enhance it. Categories such as plant ID, plant anatomy, range inventory/monitoring, soils, and stocking rates will be covered on Tuesday by experts from the USDA at each of the educational sites.

In addition to the youth workshops and contests, the host committee has planned some great local tours for ranchers to learn about range management and issues in the **Golden Triangle area of Montana**. There will be lots of fun and educational workshops where you can learn about precision farming, high-resolution scouting, and grazing management especially during drought conditions to name a few.

White reported that the Tour on Tuesday morning will start out viewing Legend’s Park and Carousel in Shelby, then they will head out to Torgerson’s LLC at Ethridge. At Ethridge, they will learn about the history of Torgerson’s, Precision Farming, Scouting, and On-Farm Trials. The Hill County Conservation District will have a drone demonstration. Then the group will travel to Oilmont, MT to KW Insurance-Happy Steer Ranch to see some sustainable grazing management. The last stop on the tour will be to visit an active oil/gas well hosted by MCR, LLC.

## Monday, June 20th

12:00-6:00 pm	Registration	4-H Exhibit Bldg.
12:00-1:00 pm	Staff-only Luncheon	4-H Food Booth
12:00-1:00 pm	Steering Committee lunch/meeting	4-H Exhibit Bldg.
12:00-6:00 pm	Practice Site	Benjamin Rd (N of fairgrounds)
1:00-5:00 pm	Instructors Prep Meeting	4-H Exhibit Bldg.
6:00-9:00 pm	Illustrated Talks	SHS Auditorium
6:00-7:00 pm	FWP Special Topic	Seewald Barn

## Tuesday, June 21st

6:00-7:30 am	Registration	4-H Exhibit Bldg.
6:00-7:30 am	Breakfast	4-H Food Booth
7:30 am	Range & Weed Collections, Range Displays	Schoolhouse - Fairgrounds
	and completed 4-H Range Unit Setup	
7:30-7:45 am	Board Buses for Workshops and Tours	4-H Exhibit Bldg. (front)
8:15-11:00 am	Workshops and Tours	Ethridge, MT
11:00-1:00 pm	MT Wool Growers Lamb BBQ	Ethridge, MT
1:00-3:30 pm	Workshops and Tours	Ethridge, MT, and various
4:00-6:00 pm	Free Time/Study/Practice Site	Fairgrounds
4:00-6:00 pm	Curriculum Advisory Meeting	4-H Exhibit Bldg.
4:00-6:00 pm	Beef Banquet	Seewald Barn
8:00-10:00 pm	Dance	4-H Exhibit Bldg.

## Wednesday, June 22nd

6:00-7:15 am	Breakfast	4-H Food Booth
7:30-7:45 am	Board Buses	4-H Exhibit Building
8:15-11:45 am	CONTEST TESTING	TBD
8:15-11:45 am	Buckaroos & Ecosystem Explorers	TBD
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch	4-H Food Booth
1:00-2:00 pm	Free Time	Fairgrounds
2:00-3:00 pm	Awards Ceremony	Seewald Barn

On Wednesday, participants will load the buses and tour CHS, Nutrien Ag Solutions, Bar S Feedlot and Big Sky Wholesale Seeds all in Shelby, MT. Please let Thad White know if you or anyone from your organization will be able to attend this year’s **Montana Range Days**.

For more details about the program, including photographs, registrations, and information about tours, workshops, etc., go to their website at **www.MontanaRangeDays.org**. As a Local Sponsor, you are entitled to attend the beef dinner held on Tuesday night of the event. If you are interested in sponsoring Range Days, please contact Thad White directly at [thad.white@shelby.k12.mt.us](mailto:thad.white@shelby.k12.mt.us).



**NOT A MEMBER YET? FILL OUT THE FORM AND SEND IT IN. JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**



**MARIAS RIVER LIVESTOCK MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**



**WANTED**  
Your Membership

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**

Marias River Livestock Association  
Carrie Sue Lerum \* PO Box 1072  
Shelby, MT 59474

**Active Membership is per individual not per ranch or corporation**

First Name :  Last Name :

Mailing Address :

Telephone :  E-Mail :

I would like an email copy of the MRLA newsletter
  I would like a paper copy of the MRLA newsletter

This is a new membership
  This is a renewal

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**Active Member \$50**  
Any individual 18 years of age or older, active in the livestock production industry in the counties of Glacier, Liberty, Pondera or Toole, Montana is eligible for active membership in the Marias River Livestock Association

**Youth Member \$10**  
Youth are under 18 years of age and interested in learning about livestock production, promoting the livestock industry and willing to volunteer 5 hours a year.

**Associate Member \$50**  
An individual, firm, corporation or partnership, no matter where it's or his/her place of business or residence may be eligible for non-voting Associate Membership

## Did you know *May is Beef Month?* **Montana Ribs**

- 3 lbs. Pork or Beef Ribs
  - 1/2 Cup Brown Sugar
  - 3 tsp Dry Mustard
  - 1 Tsp. Salt
  - 1/8 Tsp. Pepper
  - 1 Tsp. Ginger
  - 1/2 Cup Tomatoe Sauce or Catchup
  - 1/2 Cup Orange Juice
  - 1 Tbsp Onion - Grated
  - 1/2 Tsp. Garlic Powder
  - 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire Sauce
- Simmer ribs in salted water 30 - 35 minutes: drain**
- Mix remaining ingredients for sauce in order given. Marinate cooled ribs in sauce in zip-top bags; turn to cover all ribs. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight. Barbecue on medium heat until just browned and heated through; baste with marinade while grilling. Serves 4**

## **Rocky Mt. Front Chili**

- 1 lb. Lean Ground Beef
  - 2 Garlic Cloves, minced
  - 1 Large Onion, diced
  - 1/2 Tsp. Salt
  - 1 Tsp. Crushed Cumin Seeds or ground
  - 1/2 Cup Water or Beef Broth
  - 1 15oz. Can Tomato Sauce
  - 1 Tsp vinegar
  - Dash of Pepper
  - 1 15oz Can Kidney Beans, undrained
- Cook beef, garlic, onion, and salt in kettle until beef is lightly browned. Add remaining ingredients except beans. Cover and simmer 30 minutes on low heat. Stir in undrained beans. Cover and simmer 25 minutes more. Serves 4**
- Serve with diced green onion, fresh tomatoes, shredded cheese.**

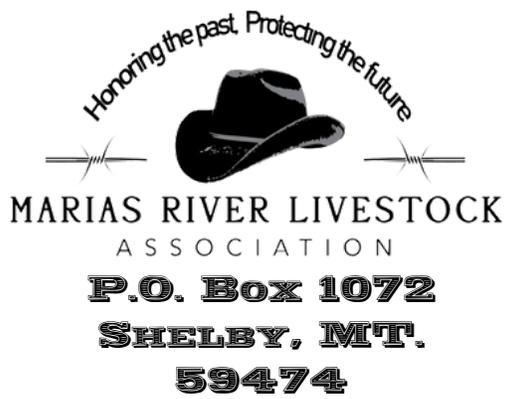
## **Whiskey Dessert Sauce**

*It is delicious over vanilla ice cream or bread pudding*

- 1/2 Cup Butter
- 1 Cup sugar
- 2 Eggs, beaten
- 1/2 Cup Bourbon



**Heat butter and sugar until sugar is dissolved and liquid is clear. Remove from heat and cool. Add eggs and beat about 1 minute. Add whiskey and continue to beat until blended.**



Tuesday, June 21, Marias River Livestock Association will be holding their Mid-Year Membership meeting in conjunction with Range Days. They have invited Vicki Olson to be the guest speaker for the beef dinner. Vicki is a lifetime rancher from Phillips County who is presently Chairman of the Public Lands Council. She is also part of the group that is trying to stop the American Prairie Reserve in eastern Montana. **The beef banquet starts at 5 p.m. with Vicki speaking at 6 p.m.** This will be at the Seewald barn at the Marias Fair Grounds

