

2009 marked the 20th anniversary for Montana Watercourse. Since 1989, the organization, based on the campus of Montana State University and housed within the Water Center, has been a statewide presence fostering watershed stewardship to Montana citizens. In 2009, Montana Watercourse lead or participated in 58 Watershed Education related events across the state. These events reached approximately 1078 Experts, 599 Volunteers, 345 Educators and 2,669 Students. Participants and experts contributed over 5,000 hours of their time toward these events.

Water Rights Trainings

In 2009, Montana Watercourse renewed attention to water rights education, as had been the focus of MTWC citizen outreach in 1989. Legislative changes in application and permitting process, led Montana Watercourse to coordinate with the Department of Natural Resource Conservation to organize two water right workshops. These trainings provided an opportunity to 114 professionals to learn from and ask questions directly to DNRC staff. Greeted with resounding support and requests for future trainings, MTWC is coordinating additional trainings scheduled for the beginning of 2010.



Helena Water Rights Training, 9/2009



Kathryn Watson demonstrates the Rolling Rivers Trailer at the Exxon Wetlands Festival

Educator & Curriculum Support

This year MTWC continued to support the K-12 community's effort to incorporate watershed education into their classrooms through Project WET trainings, festival support, educator network support, conference presentations, curriculum development, distributing resources, volunteer monitoring training, MWCC Education & Outreach participation, and building new relationships with other outreach entities. MTWC lead or contributed to 24 K-12 Educator watershed events that reached 1,517 adults and over 2,669 students.

MTWC expanded the education program through active participation in the newly-formed Montana Youth Restoration Partnership, whose current mission is to explore the potential for integrating middle and high school students in restoration activities in Montana.

Montana Watershed Coordination Council

MTWC plays an active role in the MWCC organization. For the past two years, Debra Earl, MTWC Director, served as Co-Chair for the Council. During this time, the all volunteer organization reorganized structurally and hired a part time coordinator. Debra provided leadership and direction through quarterly meetings, listserv updates, Steering Committee participation, and general organization administration. MTWC staff also participated on the Education and Outreach Committee.



Volunteer Monitoring

MTWC, in partnership with Montana State University Extension Water Quality (MSUEWQ), completed a pilot VM Certification training program. Four volunteers were trained in June 2009. They have since collected data which will be uploaded to the newly updated VM Database the beginning of 2010. MT Water Center was contracted to complete the database updates. The certification pilot represents a big step forward in the VM training program. MTWC now has all the essential elements including a volunteer quality assurance project plan, an updated addendum to the VM Guidebook, and an updated database that will improve the training program.



MTWC contracted with MSUEWQ to conduct two VM trainings in 2009 that reached 14 people. MTWC will continue to partner with MSUEWQ to certify future volunteers and further develop the VM Database.

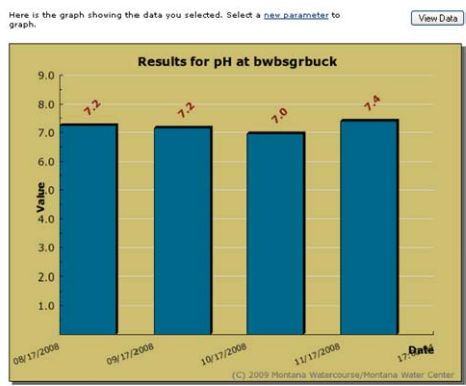
MTWC also conducted our annual Water Summit to support educators and students involved with VM, participated in the MWCC Water Quality Monitoring Work Group, and the Rocky Mountain Watershed Network. MTWC also conducted an evaluation to determine who was interested in monitoring and training. MTWC received several generous grants to support this program.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Montana Volunteer Water Monitoring Project. It includes a navigation menu with 'HELP', 'LIBRARY', and 'FORMS'. A central map displays monitoring locations with green markers. Text on the page describes the project's goals and provides instructions for volunteers.

Enter the data values as they are recorded on your Data Collection form at this sample [Field Results Data](#) sheet for more details.

Click for typical values. Click for units conversion info.

PARAMETER	VALUE
Air Temp (deg C)	<input type="text"/>
Water Temp (deg C)	<input type="text"/>
Specific Cond ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$)	<input type="text"/>
pH (none)	<input type="text"/>
Alkalinity (mg/L)	<input type="text"/>
DO (mg/L)	<input type="text"/>
DO (%)	<input type="text"/>
Turbidity (NTU)	<input type="text"/>
Nitrate (mg/L)	<input type="text"/>
Phosphate (mg/L)	<input type="text"/>
Flow (cfs)	<input type="text"/>



Clockwise from the top left, new VM database features: Google maps, simplified data entry, and charting capability.

Outreach to Development Professionals

Realtors have an important job of welcoming and educating new landowners moving to Montana. Water resources are often located on the most desirable places to live. While these areas provide a potential higher market value, new landowners need assistance and resources to help them understand their responsibility in caring for water resources on their property. During 2009, MTWC offered and supported continuing education courses to approximately 400 REALTORS. This class highlighted watershed basics, buffers, floodplains, groundwater regulations, and conservation and restoration options and resources. With a grant from DNRC, MTWC looks forward to developing this course online in 2010.



Development can alter the hydrology of a landscape and adversely affect water quality, cause erosion and increase chances of flooding. Although new development has the potential to negatively impact rivers, streams, and groundwater low impact development (LID) designs minimize these impacts. LID is a form of stormwater management and controls runoff from impervious surfaces at the source and prevents it from reaching local water bodies. Montana Watercourse highlighted the benefits of low impact development in protecting local water resources in the presentations to the Gallatin Planning Board and the Montana Nursery and Landscape Association. These presentations reached over 60 development professionals in a position to affect how land near water resources is developed .

Organization Development

MTWC announced a new logo and updated website at the end of 2009. MTWC staff worked for months with a web developer (Bearing the Light) to launch a website that is easily updated, relevant, timely and pleasing to the eye. MTWC Director developed a database to more easily and consistently track all program activities, grants, contacts, resource distribution and event registrations. MTWC applied for several grants and explored other fundraising options.

The screenshot shows the Montana Watercourse website interface within a Microsoft Access database window. The website has a navigation menu with the following items: Home, Events, Montana Water Facts, Water Resources, Water Monitoring, Educators, Realtors, and Publications. The main content area includes a 'Welcome to Montana Watercourse' message, a 'News & Events' section with a recent article titled 'Water Rights: What You Need to Know' dated Apr 27, 2010, and a 'Happy Holidays' banner with a photo of a family. The database window shows the website's content being viewed through a 'Switchboard' table.