



PARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Local, commonsense conservation – working together for Park County.

SUMMER IN PARK COUNTY



Anderson Ranch,
picture from
Northern
Yellowstone Open
Lands.

»»» TWO NEW CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IN PARK COUNTY

“Robert and Valerie Anderson have partnered with Northern Yellowstone Open Lands, a regional initiative of the Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLT), to forever conserve their 884-acre historic family ranch, located southwest of Livingston in the Trail Creek area. The Andersons worked with Northern Yellowstone Open Lands to establish a voluntary land protection agreement, or “conservation easement,” ensuring the property will remain intact and available for agriculture for generations to come.” Click here read the full story:

<https://www.gvlt.org/news/historic-trail-creek-ranch>

“Over 1,500 acres of highly scenic agricultural land in Paradise Valley’s stunning Mill Creek drainage will remain intact and undeveloped through a conservation easement established by Alan and Laurie Redfield and Sarah Nollmeyer, in partnership with Northern Yellowstone Open Lands, a regional initiative of GVLT.” Click here read the full story:

<https://www.gvlt.org/news/mill-creek-ranch>

»»» 310 PERMITS - IT'S FREE, IT'S THE LAW!

Any activity that physically alters or modifies the bed or banks of a perennially flowing stream needs a 310 permit from the Park Conservation District before proceeding. This permit is required under the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310 Law). Permits are free of charge. Work done without a 310 permit is subject to fines in addition to the costs of any required remediation.

310 applications are due to the Conservation District on the 15th of each month. They can be submitted electronically to kelly.arterburn@mt.nacdnet.net, by mail, or dropped off in our office.

The Park Conservation District monthly board meetings are held at 11:00 AM on the first Tuesday of each month in the Livingston USDA Building conference room at 5242 Hwy 89 South. We review 310 permit applications, Watershed updates, NRCS updates, and Park County Planning Board updates. The public is welcome to attend.



NEW WATERSHED COORDINATOR UPPER YELLOWSTONE & SHIELDS WATERSHED GROUPS

Hello everyone,

I am honored to join the Upper Yellowstone and Shields Valley Watershed groups as part of the Park County Conservation District team. It's a privilege to be stepping into a role that supports the incredible work already underway. I look forward to continuing that legacy while offering my support, energy, and expertise to help advance our shared goals.

A bit about me: I am Danielle (Duni) Proctor, and my roots stretch across the West—from my family's sheep and cattle ranch in Wyoming to the peaks and prairies of Montana. With a graduate degree in range management and a lifelong passion for land stewardship, I am committed to ensuring the long-term resilience of working lands and natural resources across the Rocky Mountain West. Supporting farmers, ranchers, and conservation partners is at the heart of what I do.

I am excited to learn what matters most to you and our community. Whether it's animal husbandry, hay production, stream restoration, water quality, rangeland health, or something else, I want to hear your priorities and understand how I can best support your efforts now and into the future.

Please don't hesitate to reach out—my door (and inbox) is always open:
parkmt.watersheds@gmail.com
406-946-1559

Thank you for welcoming me into this important work. I'm excited for what's ahead.

Warmly,
Danielle (Duni) Proctor
Watersheds Coordinator
Park County Conservation District



MONTANA DEQ AWARDS \$500,000 TO SHIELDS RIVER WATERSHED

Montana DEQ has awarded \$500,000 to the Shields River watershed through its 2025 Nonpoint Source (NPS) Project Funding program. These funds are designated for Focus Watersheds to implement restoration efforts in the Shields area.

Eligible projects include both on-the-ground restoration and capacity building, education, and outreach. DEQ prioritizes work that restores natural processes—such as stream channel migration, floodplain connectivity, and native riparian vegetation—and shows measurable water quality improvements.

- On-the-ground projects may request between \$10,000 and \$300,000.
- Capacity building, education, and outreach projects may request \$10,000 to \$30,000.
- Projects must be completed within three years, with a possible 1.5-year extension.
- A 40% non-federal match is required and may include in-kind time and resources.

Match calculation formula:

$$((319 \text{ dollars requested}) \div 0.60) - (\text{grant request}) = \text{required 40\% non-federal match}$$

Eligible activities include planning, design, permitting, construction, outreach, monitoring, administration, and competitively awarded mini-grants.

For more information, contact the Park Conservation District.

Partners in this effort include Montana DEQ, Park Conservation District, Trout Unlimited, and Montana Freshwater Partners.

<https://deq.mt.gov/water/Programs/nonpoint>

➤➤➤ FREE WELL WATER TEST KITS:

Human health related groundwater quality testing suggestions:

- Nitrate and Bacteria (E. coli and total coliform) should be tested regularly, ideally every year.
- Lead can be a concern if household plumbing was installed prior to the mid-1990s, especially if well water is corrosive.
- Copper can be an issue if household plumbing includes copper and well water is corrosive.
- Arsenic, Copper, Fluoride, Lead, Nitrate, Selenium have been found above the human health threshold in this and/or a neighboring county.



Stop by the Conservation District office to pick up a free water test kit provided by MSU Extension Well Educated Program. Follow the instructions included in the kit and mail the water sample and payment to the lab by priority mail.



FREE POLLINATOR SEED AT THE PARK CD



Southwest Montana Pollinator Mix

The Park Conservation District will have 3 seed mixes available this fall; Conservation Mix, Southwest MT Mix and Backyard Mix. Stop by the Park CD office in the USDA Building to pick up a package of **FREE** pollinator seed!

Conservation Mix – 500 sf
Birdsfoot trefoil, Alfalfa, Sainfoin, Lacy Phacelia, Small Burnet, Lewis Flax, Slender Wheatgrass, Tall Wheatgrass

SW MT Mix - 1,000 sf
Prairie Coneflower, Indian Blanketflower, Purple Prairie Clover, Small Burnet, Maximillian Sunflower, Black-Eyed Susan, Lewis Blue Flax

Backyard Mix - 100 sf
Prairie Coneflower, Blanketflower, Maximillian Sunflower, Black-Eyed Susan, Lewis Flax, Western Yarrow, Rocky Mtn Beeplant, Lacy Phacelia

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Color | Life Cycle | Bloom Time |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------|
| <i>Ratibida columnifera</i> | Prairie coneflower | Yellow | Perennial | June to September |
| <i>Gaillardia aristata</i> | Indian blanketflower | Yellow/Red | Perennial | July to September |
| <i>Dalea purpurea</i> | Purple prairie clover | Purple | Perennial | June to September |
| <i>Sanguisorba minor</i> | Small burnet* | Pink | Perennial | Late May to June |
| <i>Helianthus maximiliani</i> | Maximilian sunflower | Yellow | Perennial | July to September |
| <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> | Black-eyed Susan | Yellow | Biennial | June to September |
| <i>Linum lewisii or perenne</i> | Lewis flax or Blue flax* | Blue | Perennial | Mid May to September |
| *non-native species | | | | |

Pictures below in order from left to right



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) - PARK COUNTY PROGRAMS

TIPs (Targeted Implementation Plans) are local-level Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) initiatives used by the NRCS in Montana to guide on-the-ground implementation of locally developed Long Range County Plans. Landowners in Park County have several financial assistance opportunities available to them, including:

- **Change on the Range: Trail Creek TIP** - Aims to reduce conifer encroachment into rangelands and to improve grass production. Available for sign-up until FY28.
- **Rooting for Soil Health TIP** - Focuses on dryland crop producers and incentivizes implementation of a majority of the soil health principles.
- **National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)** - Works to help reduce sediment and agriculture related nutrient loads that impact riparian functions in the Shield River watershed. Contact NRCS to see what practices are available.
- **Montana Grassland Restoration TIP** - focuses on establishing perennial vegetation on marginally productive areas of cropland and increase the diversity of non-native grass monocultures in Montana.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) - signups are open. [Click here for more information.](#)

For application resources and more information, visit the following link:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives/montana/whats-available-in-my-county/park-county>

GIVE A HOOT! **SUPPORT THE UPPER YELLOWSTONE WATERSHED GROUP**



It's nearing the last week of Park County's Month Long GIVE A HOOT Community Giving Challenge! The deadline is July 31st.

As July passes by, so does your opportunity to contribute to groups dedicated to supporting the lands you care about! All donations given through the GIVE A HOOT event go directly to the UYWG with partial matching by the Park County Community Foundation, boosting your impact!

We are grateful for your commitment to strengthen our community. Donations can start as small as \$5 but they all add up in supporting our work in conserving and understanding the Upper Yellowstone Watershed.

Donate and support UYWG today!

<https://www.give-a-hoot.org/organization/UpperYellowstoneWatershedGroup>

The Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group works to:

1. Preserve production agriculture and the open space it provides by promoting a stewardship approach to watershed management.
2. Provide dependable and accessible information through collection and dissemination of scientifically sound monitoring and assessment data.
3. Maintain and preserve the overall health of the watershed by developing best practices and seeking innovative solutions to watershed issues.
4. Improve drought response and preparedness.
5. Education and outreach to the community on watershed related issues.
6. Provide a collective 'voice for the watershed' through the exchange of ideas and response to issues.



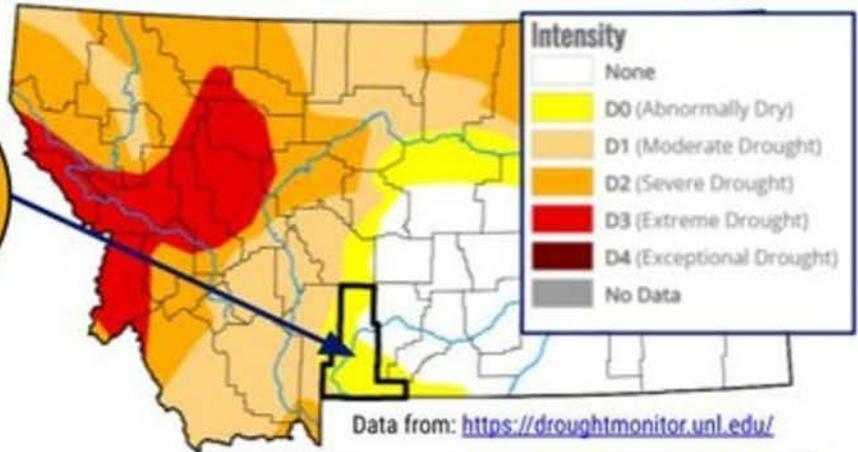
Upper Yellowstone Water Supply Report July 23, 2025



The Montana Department of
**Natural Resources
& Conservation**

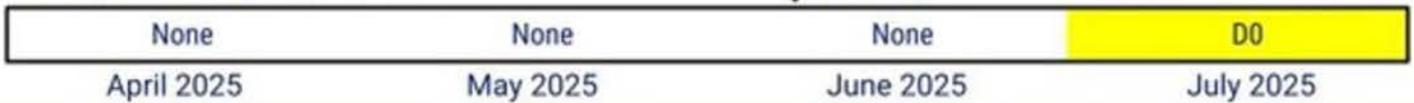
US DROUGHT MONITOR

After being entirely out of drought for the past several months, Park County has sipped back into D0. 88% of the county is in D0 and 4% is in D1.



Data from: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Drought status progression



SOIL MOISTURE

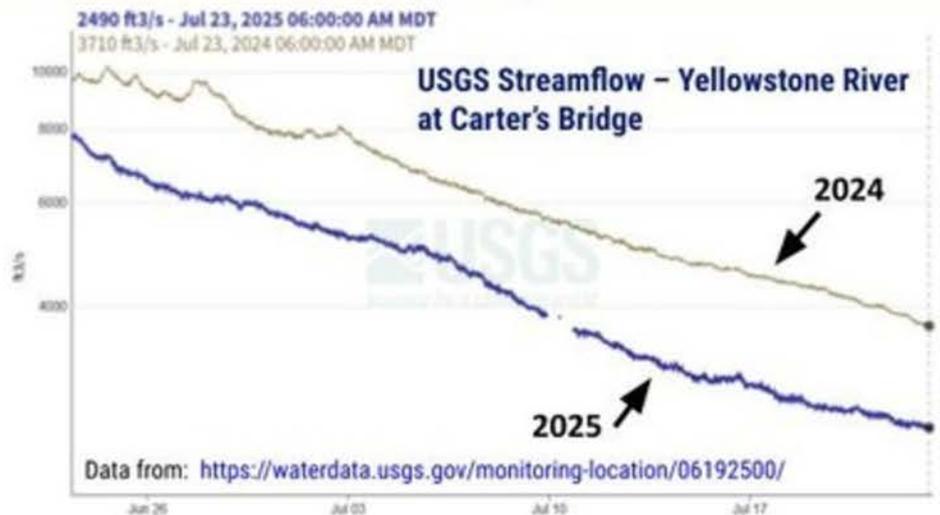
Basin soil moisture across elevations



Monitoring sites show the expected trend in soil moisture. The bump in soil moisture during the spring across all elevations was followed by a decline as snowpack was depleted and evaporative demands increased with warmer temperatures. The decline of mid and low elevation soil moisture has begun to level off and is similar to this time last year. High elevation soil moisture is still rapidly decreasing and is lower than this time last year.

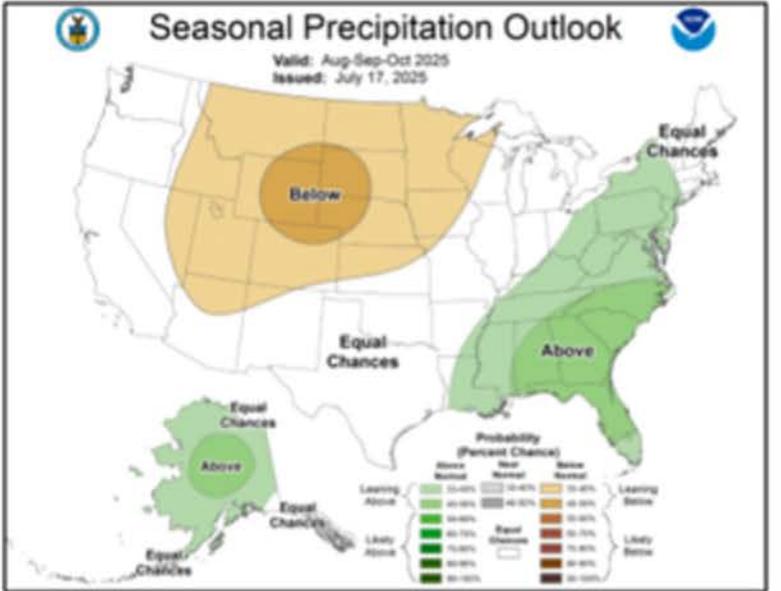
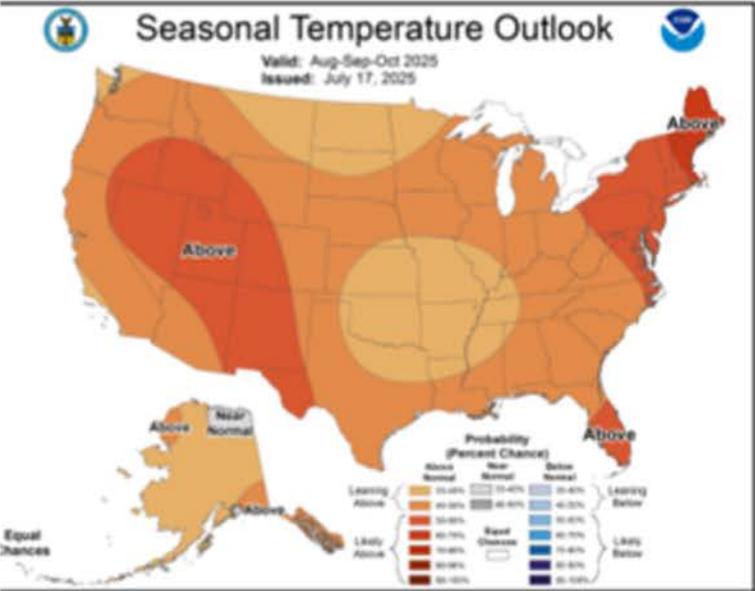
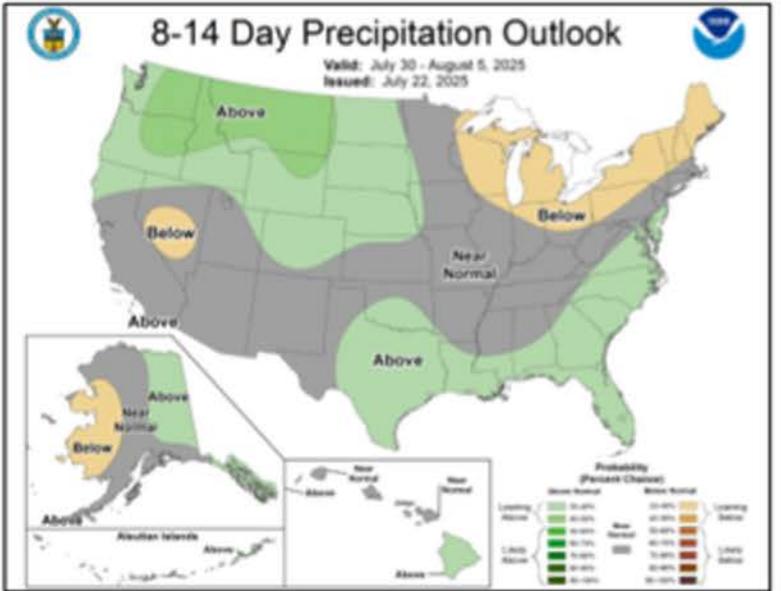
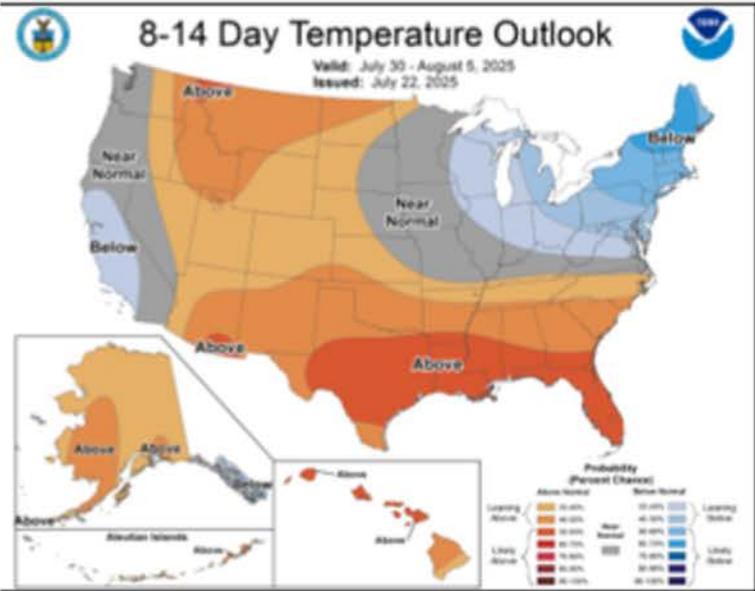
STREAMFLOW

The Yellowstone River flow at Carter's Bridge peaking on June 2 at 20,500cfs. Peak flow was slightly lower and earlier than the 2024 peak of 23,700cfs on June 10. Currently, flow is below the median and below this time last year. Lower streamflow could be due to the lower than normal high elevation soil moisture. Due to depleted snowpack and declining soil moisture, streamflow will continue to drop throughout the summer.



Data from: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/06192500/>

TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION



SEASONAL OUTLOOK

The short-term forecast (8-14 days) predicts above average temperatures and precipitation. The seasonal outlook predicts above average temperature and below average precipitation. Park county was briefly out of drought, and has now dipped back into D0, Abnormally Dry. The precipitation we received in the first half of July has not been enough to combat the heat. Soil moisture and streamflow will likely continue to decline over the next couple of months. August precipitation will be critical in determining future trends and drought conditions.

We transitioned out of La Niña and into ENSO-Neutral in May. ENSO-Neutral is forecasted to continue through the summer and into the fall. It is possible we will transition back to La Niña this winter, but it is equally as likely that we will remaining in ENSO-Neutral.

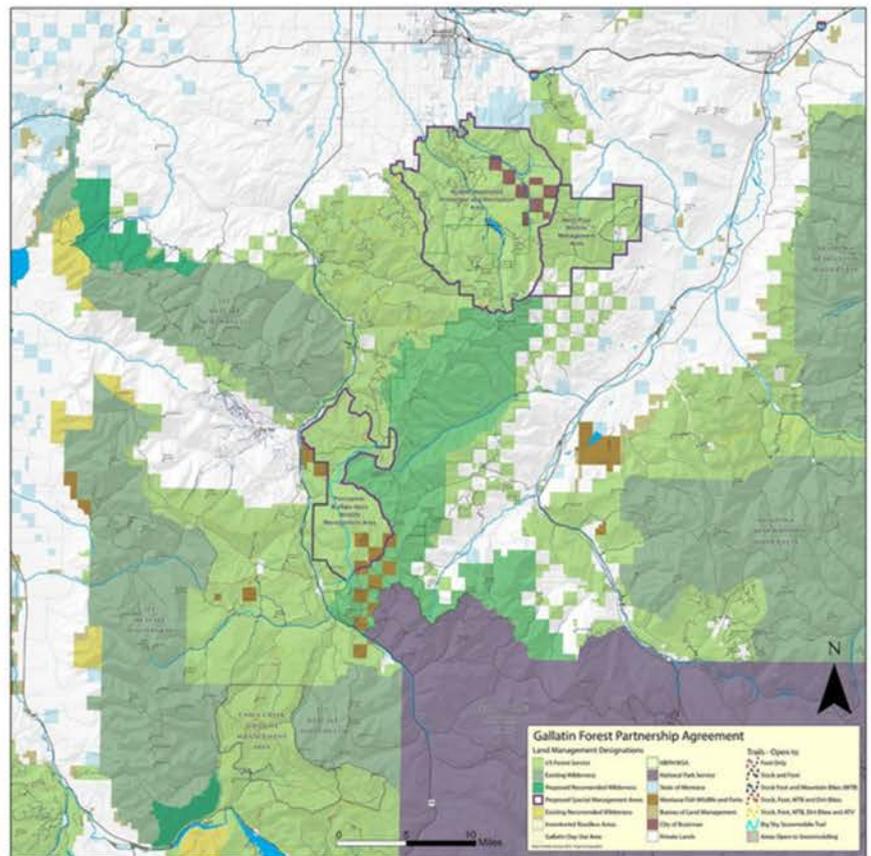
Data from: <https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/forecasts/>

OPPORTUNITIES AND INFORMATION:

- Do you need supplemental irrigation water? Please contact the Park Conservation District to learn more about applying for a **reserved water authorization**.
- Please join us for the **Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group** BBQ on September 4, 2025.

»»» THE GALLATIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP

The Gallatin Forest Partnership is making headway on the the Greater Yellowstone Conservation and Recreation Act. Our watershed coordinator, Danielle (Duni) Proctor and members from the Gallatin Forest Partnership met this month to discuss the current status of the Greater Yellowstone Conservation and Recreation Act. Please see the map for proposed changes. For more information go to www.greateryellowstoneact.org/ or contact the Park CD.



Map from <https://gallatinpartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/gallatinForestPartnershipLarge011718-2.jpg>



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*To opt in or out of Park CD emails, please contact Kelly Arterburn