

# EPA Region 8's

## Tribal Wetlands Protection Programs

*Summary information, trends, and accomplishments*



Jill Minter, R8 Wetlands Program

Tom Johnson, R8 Water Quality Program

National Tribal Water Quality Conference

November 15, 2011

# Did You Know?



- For some Region 8 Tribes, the majority of their water resources are wetlands
- Many have very high quality and rare types of wetlands
- Program-building is comprehensive
- At high risk from energy development

# Summary Information

- 7 active Tribal wetlands programs
- Multiple sources of funding
- 3 EPA-approved and 2 Draft Tribal Wetland Program Plans
- All 4 Core Elements
- Activities include ordinances, wetland Water Quality Standards, baseline mapping and monitoring, and wetland restoration and protection



# Summary Information



- All programs conducting wetland monitoring and assessment
- Filling gaps in National Wetlands Inventory maps
- Two Tribes participated in the National Wetland Condition Assessment
- First Reservation-wide wetland assessment
- Manning Lake Wetlands Tribal Wildlife Refuge is a National model

# Trends and New Directions



- High quality strategic projects
- Project partnerships
- Using data to make decisions
- More comprehensive programs
- Region 8 Wetlands Capacity-building Workshops
  - Next Workshop, Spring 2013, Utah
- Professional trainings

# Trends and New Directions - Continued

- EPA Region 8 Tribal Wetlands Technical Assistance Strategic Plan under development
- Goal - Wetland Grants Database for tech-transfer
- Goal - Wetland Program Plans for each active Tribe and State
- Goal - Sustainable financing for active programs



# Examples of Outstanding Tribal WPDG Accomplishments

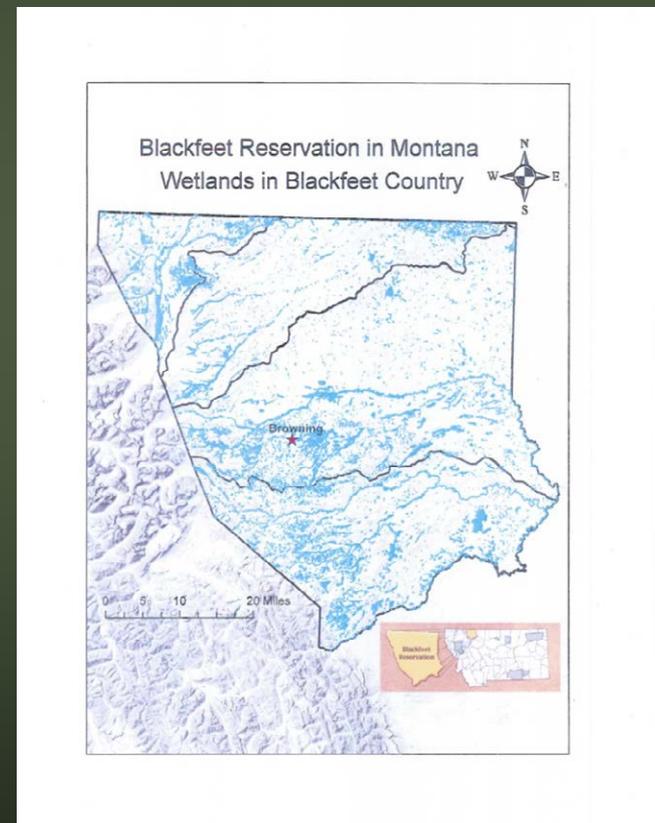
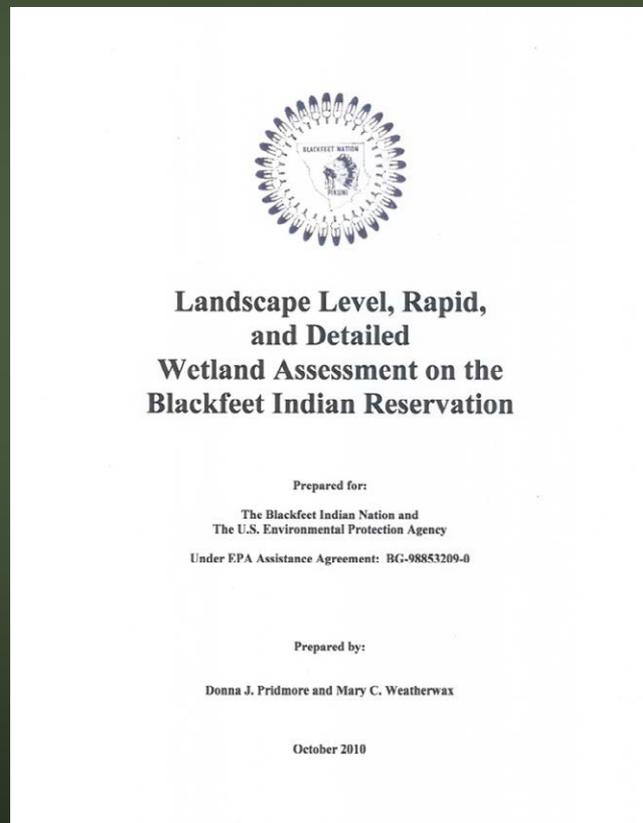


# Blackfeet Tribe

## Reservation-wide Wetland Assessment

Region 8's 1<sup>st</sup> Reservation-wide wetland assessment!

There are more wetlands than people realized



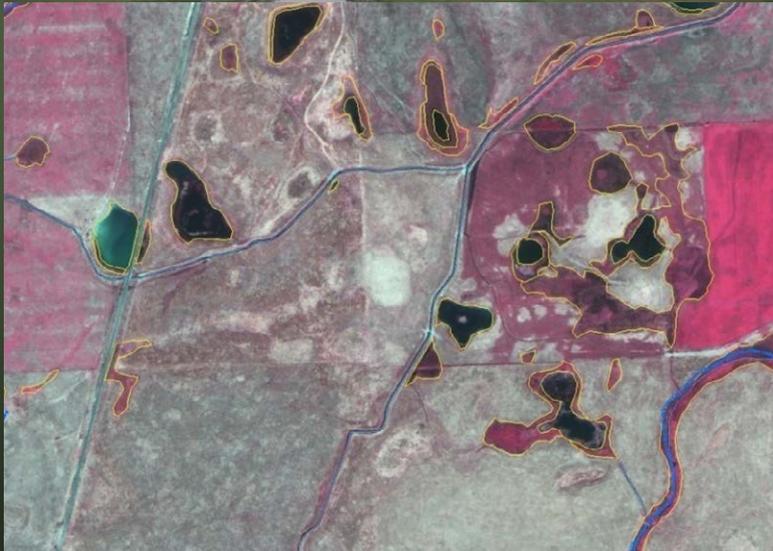
# Chippewa Cree

## Sweetgrass Restoration Monitoring and Assessment



- Sweetgrass wetlands identification, restoration and protection project
- Wetland assessment protocol includes cultural component
- Wetland Water Quality Standards protect cultural plants
- Wetland Program Development Grant and 319 funding

# Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Nexus Mapping Project



- NWI wetland mapping using color infrared aerial photography identified over 34,000 wetlands
- One of the most dense intermountain pothole areas
- Identified wetlands with nexus potential
- Additional attribute to NWI
- Supports CWA jurisdiction and protection for wetlands connected to “Waters of the U.S. “



# Fort Peck - Manning Lake Wetlands Tribal Wildlife Refuge Project

## WITH THE TRIBES IN MONTANA

MANNING LAKE WETLANDS TRIBAL RESERVE  
IS A CRITICAL STOPOVER FOR MIGRATING BIRDS

BY CATHARINE MOSER



The wind is relentless in southeastern Montana as it swoops and swirls over sunny rolling hills on the two-million-acre Fort Peck Indian Reservation. Clinging to a brown stalk of little bluestem, a Chestnut-collared Longspur bob and swoops. In the wide blue sky, a Northern Harrier dips and soars. And below, among the faded reeds, a drake Mallard waddles, searching for seeds and insects.

"The wetlands are relatively healthy and in good condition," shouts Jeanne Spatz, above the howl of the wind. She's the wetlands conservation and development program coordinator for the Fort Peck Fish and Game Department. Beaming with enthusiasm, she adds, "In the spring, everything is green and full of birds. It's a noisy place. Fall is the quiet time."

Quiet? Sure, I think, as we're battered by raucous gusts of wind and our long hair whips wildly around our faces.

On this October afternoon, Spatz and I search for birds at Manning Lake Wetlands Tribal Wildlife Refuge on the reservation. The migrants have already left the lake for their wintering grounds, but come spring, thousands of hungry migrating songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and other water-loving birds will fly to Manning Lake to loaf, breed, nest, and raise their young. Considered one of the

Photo: Justin  
The wind blows relentlessly across the prairie, sweeping and swirling over the sunny hills. As left, an adult male Northern Harrier dips low over the grasslands, searching for prey.

# Other Recent Tribal Projects



# Region 8 Tribal Participation National Wetland Condition Assessment

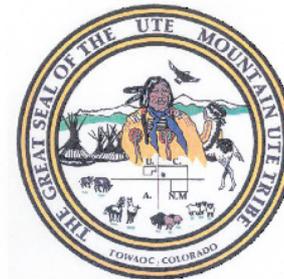
- Sites on Confederated Salish and Kootenai and Fort Peck Tribal lands
- Partnership with Montana Natural Heritage Program for field sampling



# Ute Mountain Ute Wetland Water Quality Standards

- Recent EPA-approved Water Quality Standards includes wetlands and springs
- One of Designated Uses is Tribal Cultural Use
- “Existing water quality, uses and functions of wetlands will be protected.”

Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
Water Quality Standards  
For Surface Waters  
of the  
Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation



Adopted by  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council

January 20, 2011  
Resolution # 2011-010

Prepared by:  
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Water Quality Specialist  
Scott Clow  
Environmental Programs Director  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

# Ute Mountain Ute Five Star Restoration Project



- Primary threat to wetland ecosystems is Salt Cedar infestation (~2000 acres)
- Every riparian corridor has been invaded
- Project supports Salt Cedar removal and wetlands and riparian restoration

# Southern Ute

## CWA Jurisdictional Determination – Pine River



- Project to demonstrate navigability and “Waters of the U.S.” status
- Part of Pine River Water Quality Survey

# Special Thanks and Recognition to Project and Program Partners

- Jeanne Spaur, Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, Fort Peck Indian Reservation
- Mary Clare Weatherwax, Blackfeet Tribe
- Keith Gopher, Chippewa Cree Tribe
- Clint Folden and Dennis Lichtenberg, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Reservation
- Patricia Ramos, Northern Cheyenne Tribe
- Katie Frye, Southern Ute
- Tomoe Natori, Ute Mountain Ute
- Denis Longknife, Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes, Fort Belknap Indian Community
- Travis Shakespeare and Dean Goggles, Eastern Shoshone & Northern Arapaho Tribes, Wind River Indian Reservation
- Linda Vance, Karen Newlon and Tara Luna, Montana Natural Heritage Program
- Toney Ott, Wetlands Program, EPA Region 8
- Jennifer Wintersteen and Maureen Kiely, EPA R8's Montana Operations Office
- Romell Nandi, Rebecca Dils, Kathleen Kutschenreuter, and Michael Scozzafava, Wetlands Division, EPA HQs

# For More Information

- Region 8 Tribal Wetlands Program contacts are Toney Ott ( 303-312- 6909, [ott.toney@epa.gov](mailto:ott.toney@epa.gov)) and Jill Minter (303-312-6084, [minter.jill@epa.gov](mailto:minter.jill@epa.gov))
- Information on Region 8 Wetland Program Development Grant (WPDG) projects can be found in EPA's New Wetland Grants Database at <http://iaspub.epa.gov/pls/grts/f?p=101:1>
- Region 8 Tribal Wetland Program Plans are posted on EPA's Wetland Program Plan website at <http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/wpp.cfm>
- EPA's Core Elements of a State and Tribal Program are at [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/wetlands/cefintro.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/cefintro.cfm)
- EPA Region 8's Wetlands Program website is <http://www.epa.gov/region8/water/wetlands/>
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' wetlands web page is at [http://www.cskt.org/tr/epa\\_wetlands.htm](http://www.cskt.org/tr/epa_wetlands.htm)
- Fort Peck Tribe's Manning Lake Wetlands Tribal Wildlife Refuge information can be found at <http://www.fortpeckoep.org/wetlands.html>
- Ute Mountain Ute's new Water Quality Standards, which include wetlands, are at [http://www.utemountainuteenvironmental.org/umep/assets/File/Water/Surface%20Water%20Standards/UMU\\_WQS\\_2011Revision\\_042011\\_supplimental.pdf](http://www.utemountainuteenvironmental.org/umep/assets/File/Water/Surface%20Water%20Standards/UMU_WQS_2011Revision_042011_supplimental.pdf)
- Information on the Ute Mountain Ute's wetlands can be found at <http://www.utemountainuteenvironmental.org/index.cfm/water-quality/wetlands1/>

