



MDA Pesticide Training Newsletter

August 2025

The latest pesticide news, announcements, and training opportunities . . .

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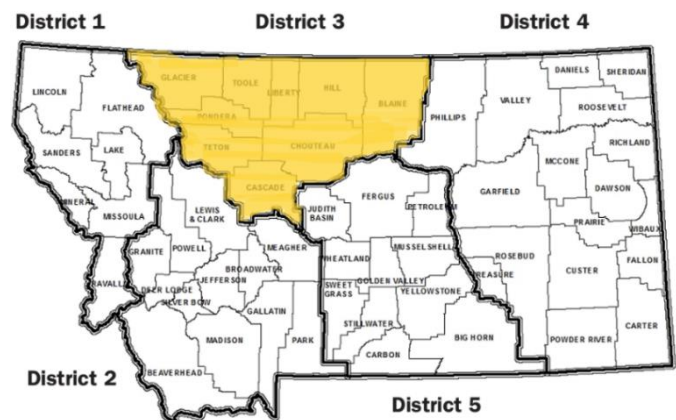
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Expiring License Categories

Click [HERE](#) to learn how to check your credits.

1. Private Applicator (60)

Private applicators in District 3 (Glacier, Toole, Liberty, Hill, Blaine, Pondera, Teton, Choteau and Cascade counties) need to either accrue six recertification credits to renew or take a closed book exam in the last year of the recertification cycle.



2. Commercial, Non-Commercial, Special Utility, Government Applicators and Dealers

Pesticide applicators with the following categories need to earn 12 CEC's by December 31st, 2025.

- Agricultural Vertebrate Pest (30)
- M-44 Sodium Cyanide (43)
- Regulatory Predator (52)
- Regulatory Rodent (54)
- Regulatory Weed (55)
- Right of Way, Rangeland, Pasture & Non-crop Pest (37)

MSU 2025 Fall Pesticide Recertification Training Opportunities

1. 2025 Pest Management Tour - Three Private Applicator Credits for attending the AM or PM Session; Six Private Applicator Credits for attending both AM and PM Sessions (Pending)

Commercial credits will also be offered. This educational tour will travel to various locations across Private Applicator Training District 3 (North-Central Montana) over five days. The MSU Extension Pesticide Education Program in cooperation with the MSU Integrated Pest Management Program are pleased to offer this pest management opportunity covering topics including crop insects, crop weeds, plant diseases of crops, water quality and pesticide performance (select locations), reducing drift (select locations), vertebrate pest management, private applicator regulatory updates and precision pest management.

- September 29th - Chinook and Havre
- September 30th - Chester and Shelby
- October 1st - Cut Bank and Conrad
- October 2nd - Choteau and Great Falls
- October 3rd - Fort Benton

Agenda and registration pending. For updated registration and agenda details periodically check the pesticide education event page at: <https://www.montana.edu/extension/pesticides/events/index.html>. Will be finalized by August 1st and possibly sooner. Contact Dr. Cecil Tharp, MSU Pesticide Education Specialist, for more information (406-994-5067; ctharp@montana.edu) or your MSU Extension County Agriculture Agent at: <https://www.montana.edu/extension/pesticides/pat/patcolist.html>.

2. 2025 Webinar Series - One Private Applicator Credit offered for each Webinar (Pending)

The MSU Extension Pesticide Education Program is hosting the 2025 Pesticide Education Webinar Series offering four one-hour, online presentations on pesticide and pest management related topics for applicators across Montana. Each webinar is one hour long with pesticide license and Certified Crop Advisor credits offered. Topics include the following:

- Oct 27 @ 12 pm – Control of woody invasives
- Nov 5 @ 1 pm – Regulatory changes impacting MT pesticide applicators
- Dec 4 @ 12 pm – Precision agriculture in MT
- Dec 18 @ 12 pm – Pesticide storage, recycling, and disposal

Registration is required at: <https://www.montana.edu/extension/pesticides/events/webinar.html>. The webinars are free to attend and all are welcome. View the event webpage for more details and credits offered. Contact Amy Bowser with questions, 406-994-5178, amy.bowser@montana.edu.

MDA Fall Pesticide Recertification Training Opportunities

1. Montana Rodent Academy – September 25, 2025, in Helena

This six-hour event will provide applicator-centered training for the successful management of commensal rodents in and around structures. Instruction will cover understanding rodenticide active ingredients, selection and use of tamper-resistant bait stations, decontamination of rodent infested areas to reduce disease risk, and control of Montana's most common structural rodent, the deer mouse. The hands-on portion of the Academy, metal bending, will consist of step-by-step instructions to create repairs that will resist rodent entry, while being aesthetically pleasing. This content will be provided by instructors representing manufacturers, distributors, regulators, and service providers who will be available to answer your questions. The cost of the training is \$50, and attendance is limited.

Registration link: bit.ly/pestregistration

2. In-Person Fall Training Schedule

Below is a list of the Montana Department of Agriculture in-person fall recertification trainings offered with the date and location of the training. Each training has a fee of \$30. Please review the specific training agendas and credits earned per category for each training location prior to signing up.

October 15, 2025 – Billings at the Hampton Inn, 5110 Southgate Drive

October 16, 2025 – Belgrade at the Holiday Inn, 309 Madison Avenue

October 22, 2025 – Kalispell at the Hampton Inn, 1140 2nd Street West

October 23, 2025 – Missoula at the Missoula County Dept. of Ecology and Extension, 1075 S. Ave. West

October 29, 2025 – Butte at Montana Tech, 1300 West Park Street

October 30, 2025 – Great Falls at Great Falls College MSU, 2100 16th Avenue South

December 10, 2025 – Helena at Montana Wild, 2668 Broadwater Avenue

To review the trainings and agendas for each training use this link: bit.ly/pestmt then scroll down to the heading, “MDA Recertification Training – In Person.” Or Scan the QR code



3. Fall Webinar Opportunities – These are FREE – you just need to register!

Management of Unprotected Birds – November 4, 2025, at 12:00PM (Noon)

Stephen Vantassel, MDA’s Vertebrate Pest Specialist will be presenting this webinar. The management of birds not protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act namely, house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), common pigeons (*Columba livia*) and Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) will be explained. The presentation reviews laws related to birds, basic bird biology before detailing the main types and categories of bird control techniques. The webinar will conclude with tips on managing woodpecker damage without needing a permit and caution about the political nature of bird control.

Registration link: bit.ly/ControlUnprotectedBirds

Vertebrate Pests and Public Health – November 18, 2025, at 12:00PM (Noon)

Stephen Vantassel, MDA’s Vertebrate Pest Specialist will be presenting this webinar. This webinar delves into health threats from commensal rodents, bats, raccoons, skunks, birds, & ticks) that threaten human health & safety. Attendees will learn key concepts regarding animal behavior and damage identification. Attention will be given to training on lesser-known threats to public health posed by these animals to help public health professionals have a greater understanding of the risks these animals pose.

Registration link: bit.ly/MDAwebinar25

Vegetation Management to Control Weeds + Help Bees – December 2, 2025, at 12:00PM (Noon)

Andony Melathopoulos, Associate Professor Pollinator Health Extension at Oregon State University, will be speaking during this webinar. The key talking points for the webinar are to recognize the bees that live along roadsides, what they need, and where they nest. Super bee plants found along rights of way and other disturbed areas will be described. Finally, an explanation of weed management strategies that help bees will be explained.

Registration link: bit.ly/Pollinators2025

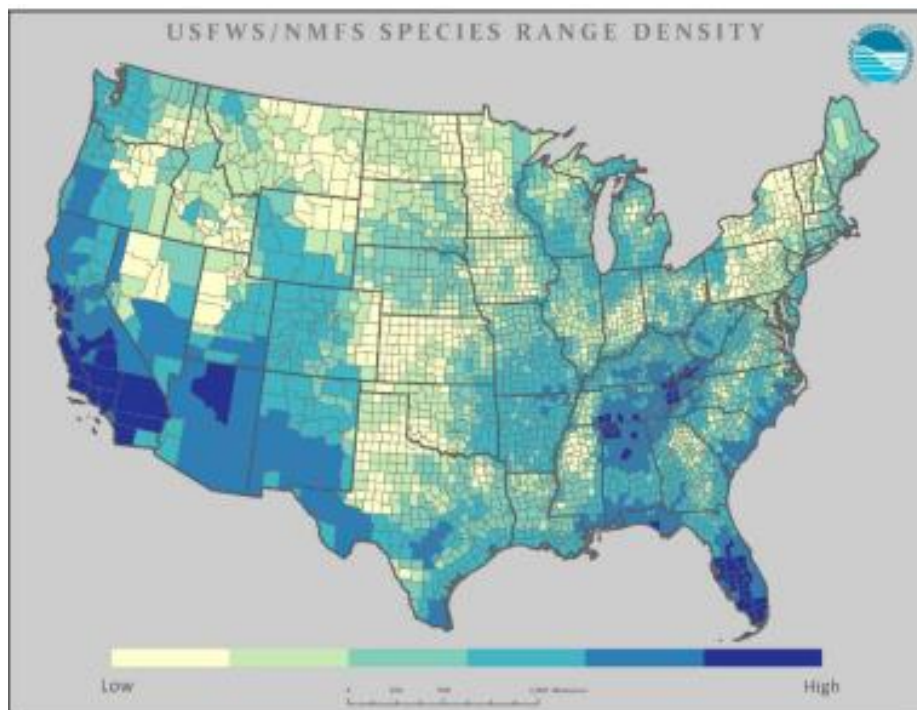
EPA Measures to Protect Endangered Species

By Cecil Tharp, Pesticide Education Specialist, MSU

Link for the full article: [AgAlert, March 7, 2025](#)

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finalized new measures to protect endangered species from pesticides. Applicators can expect a few herbicide pesticide labels to contain additional endangered species mitigation measures starting in 2025; additional labels containing these requirements will slowly appear over the next 15 years.

In December 2002, EPA published the Endangered Species Protection Plan (ESPP) for public comment. Upon reviewing comments, EPA published its final approach to field implementation of the ESPP on November 2, 2005. EPA has or will finalize the ESPP review of all: 1) herbicides and rodenticides in 2024, 2) insecticides in 2025, and 3) fungicides in 2026. EPA estimates that all endangered species updates will be distributed on product labels within the next 15 years, with some agricultural herbicide labels updated and distributed in 2025. Labels may include spray buffer requirements (i.e. nozzles, buffers), runoff-erosion requirements, or geographically specific pesticide use limitation areas (PULAs).



The map illustrates the United States Fish, Wildlife Service and National Marine Fishery Service Endangered Species Density.

For More Information - See the [Endangered Species Educational Resources Toolbox \[epa.gov\]](#) that organizes educational resources including guidance documents, handouts, presentations, webinars, and other resources relating to EPA's endangered species work. For any questions on this article contact Cecil Tharp, Pesticide Education Specialist, at the MSU Extension Pesticide Education Program office (406-994-5067, ctharp@montana.edu).

MDA Ag Core Program by Amanda Coyle, MDA AgCorps Program Coordinator



AgCorps is an AmeriCorps program housed within the Montana Department of Agriculture. AmeriCorps (also known as the Corporation for National and Community Service) is the federal agency for national service and volunteerism. Programs across the country recruit members to build capacity in their communities and get things done. The mission of AgCorps is to create resilient communities through Ag literacy and environmental stewardship education thus creating more resilient, healthy and engaged communities in Montana.

2024 was the first year of operation, and we had some great success to show for it! From the program's start to April of this year (2025) we were able to teach **971** individuals, recruit **168** volunteers and help build the capacity of **22** organizations in the state. AgCorps also provides job readiness and technical assistance training to better equip the members for life after service. Another component of AmeriCorps is to provide civic reflections periodically throughout the year. These are intended to prompt deep discussions and create more active, informed, and engaged citizens for the nation.



Member preparing meal kits for the community with Helena Food Share.



A member teaching a "Harvest of the Month" lesson on leafy greens to a preschool classroom.

Member positions range from providing interactive harvest of the month lessons to children and training landowners on how to map and monitor their land for noxious weeds, to assisting our pesticide container recycling program and developing the state's Agritourism efforts. Some of our partner host sites include St. Peter's hospital and Helena Food Share in Helena, Garden City Harvest and Farm Connect in Missoula, Farm to School of Park County in Livingston, and Montana Farmer's Union in Great Falls. Full position descriptions for all our positions can be found on our website: <https://agr.mt.gov/AgCorps>



Members assisting with bee inspection at Gardenwerks in Helena.

Due to recent federal funding cuts, the program had to shut down operations earlier than expected for the 2025 program year. We hope to be in full swing with 14 members in 2026! If you think you know someone who may be interested in this program, please direct them to our program website!

Members assisting Prickly Pear Land trust with trail maintenance at 10 Mile Creek Park in Helena.



MDA Pesticide Container Recycling by Carli Davis, *Pesticide Disposal*

The Pesticide Container Recycling Program was created to keep pesticide container plastic out of Montana's landfills. All containers must be emptied, cleaned thoroughly, and brought into our recycling tech on the event days. A truck equipped with shredding equipment and poly transport bags will inspect, shred, and bag containers onsite. The Pesticide Container Recycling Program has currently collected 14,257 lbs. in 2025 and will continue through December as weather allows.

Here is a schedule of collection events located on our website:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d252cf8e896f4ec49a46dc695eb2bc58>

Here is a 5-minute video of the proper way to triple and pressure rinsing small containers (pressure rinse only if the product label allows) video:

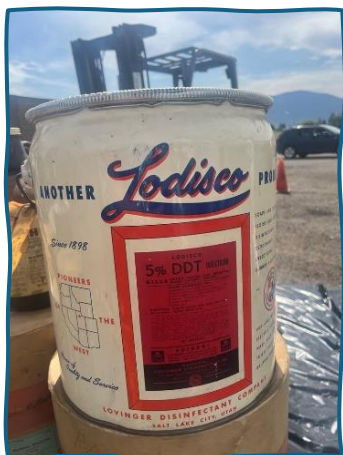
https://agrecycling.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/SMALL_CONTAINERS_REV_2_1_1.mp4

Here is a 4-minute video on how to triple and pressure rinse large drums:

https://agrecycling.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ACRC_RINSING_DRUMS_R5_1.mp4

MDA Waste Disposal Program by Carli Davis, *Pesticide Disposal*

The Waste Pesticide Disposal program was created in 1994 to keep waste pesticides out of Montana's Landfills. This program sponsored by the Montana Department of Agriculture collects and properly disposes of unwanted and unusable waste pesticides and metal pesticide containers. For most participants the program is free.



MDA has already held events in Kalispell, Plains, Drummond, Polson, Hamilton, and Butte in 2025 collecting a total of 28,301 lbs. with 97 participants. The images above (courtesy of Carli Davis) represent the collection site and materials in which need to be disposed. The next scheduled events in 2025 are:

Sept. 23 - Plentywood

Sept. 24 - Glasgow

Sept. 25 - Glendive

Sept. 26 - Hardin

Participants with more than 200 pounds of waste pesticides are charged \$1 per pound over 200 lbs. For more information on accepted materials, disposal schedules, event registration and FAQ, please visit our website:

<https://agr.mt.gov/Pesticide-Waste-Disposal-Program>

EDRR Roundup: Rush Skeletonweed, Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

By Josh Wagoner, MDA Early Detection Rapid Response Coordinator

In the August 2024 MDA Pesticide Training Newsletter, Montana's relative success with rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*), a Montana Priority 1B Noxious Weed, was reviewed. Twelve months later, we are still succeeding, with ~4,000 total acres of rush skeletonweed in the state, 1/1000th of the 4 million acres to the west of us in Idaho, but that success is becoming more and more precarious with each passing week. Rush skeletonweed's main inroads are our main roads in, not surprisingly, from the two interstate highways coming into Montana on the west side of the state, I-15 and I-90. Smaller arteries, like Highway 200 and Highway 2 in the northwestern side of the state are also potential vectors, along with potentially many other roads. From roadsides rush skeletonweed can easily spread to adjacent land, where it can cause serious degradation to wildland, farm and ranchland, and even residential property, and once well-established it is almost impossible to eradicate.

This summer we have found the few previously existing rush skeletonweed sites along I-90 in Mineral and Missoula counties have greatly increased; a few plants appeared in Beaverhead County on I-15, where we have never had rush skeletonweed before; and two plants were found in the I-90 median near Three Forks, which means it made it across five counties (Granite, Powell, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, and Jefferson) from its nearest known population in Missoula County! This is bad news and news to take seriously. The affected county weed districts and Montana Department of Transportation are doing just that, mobilizing immediately to treat known locations and wide swaths of surrounding roadsides and doing extensive surveying for additional sites, with the goal of containing and then eradicating anything found and preventing spread to other areas, but success is less likely without your help. You can contribute by looking for rush skeletonweed and reporting any suspected sightings.

Rush skeletonweed is a perennial in the Aster family. It has a rosette that looks identical to a dandelion. You can see these rosettes in May and June, but when it bolts the stem is rigid and the bottom few inches of the stem has stiff downward pointed hairs. It does not have prickly upper stems or leaves like prickly lettuce or sow thistles do. It gets its name from its skeleton-like appearance and the wiry stems have very few leaves. Flowering begins in mid to late July and will continue until late September and into October. Flowers are bright yellow, about the size of a dime, typically with 9-12 strap-shaped petals with toothed tips.

Some plants in the state flower at only 1 or 2 feet tall and some plants may grow to 3 feet or taller. Weedy mustards in Montana often have pale yellow flowers and always have flowers with four petals. Rush skeletonweed also exudes a milky white latex sap from any broken plant part. Weedy mustards do not. Chicory and the native rush skeleton plant look very similar to rush skeletonweed but have blue and pink flowers. Rush skeletonweed can be easiest to spot in late summer and into fall when it's flowering and because it stays green when other plants have cured. Because it can spread from vegetative buds on lateral roots, it's usually grown in clusters of several plants or even dense patches that may be an acre or more.

If you suspect you've seen rush skeletonweed, please contact your county weed coordinator or the Montana Department of Agriculture's EDDR Program at MTEDRR@mt.gov as soon as possible. Document the location with GPS coordinates and take lots of pictures, which can easily be done with apps like EDDMapS or iNaturalist, but do not pull it. To learn more about rush skeletonweed or other high priority Montana weeds, visit <https://agr.mt.gov/Noxious-Weed-Task-Force-Program>. Thank you and happy hunting!



The images above illustrate the hairs and rosette of rush skeletonweed and were found in Beaverhead County on I-15.

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