

Conservation News

The Women's Edition

MCCONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

THE MONTANA SUFFRAGE STORY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

The Women's Edition

- Montana Women Celebrate 100 Years of Equal Suffrage
- Montana Women and Agriculture, An Oral History Project
- McCone County Women

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We strive for accuracy in reporting. If there are any errors, please let us know by contacting us at 406-485-2744 x100.

Did you know that before 1914, women could not vote in Montana? On November 3, 1914, Montana MEN gathered to vote to give women that privilege which had been until then their exclusive domain. Equal suffrage passed narrowly in favor: 53 to 47 percent. This meant that Montana women would vote six years before her sisters in other parts of the United States. The Nation did not ratify the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution until August 18, 1920.

On the November 12, 1914 edition of *The Big Timber Pioneer*, a Sweet Grass County paper, you may see a glimpse of the editor's reproach where it proclaimed "it was a great fight they put up ... Nobody except themselves thought they would win, proof positive that two-thirds of the battle at any time lies in aggressiveness and confidence."

He further states that women having won the right to vote doesn't really affect anything that matters. Prices, tariffs and markets remain the same. Nothing changes, "cattle and horses will weigh the same ... the earth will yield fully as much in hay and grain". He closes by saying "it simply adds so many more to the list of voters in every county in the state, and, for better or for worse, henceforth woman will have a say in who's who and why, and what is and when." His opinion was quite commonplace in 1914.

The most famous woman behind the equal suffrage movement in Montana was Ms. Jeannette Rankin. She was born near Missoula, Montana in 1880. She was the daughter of a school teacher, Ms. Olive Pickering and Mr. John Rankin, a rancher and developer. She was the oldest out of eleven children, seven who survived childhood. She attended the University of Montana in Missoula and graduated in 1902 with a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Biology. While visiting her brother in the east, exposure to the slums had her returning back to the classroom to pursue studies in social work. Later when residing in Washington state, she became interested in the equal suffrage movement. She was active and helped have a measure passed there in 1911. She then returned home to win that right for Montana women in 1914.

In 1916, before the 19th Amendment passed nationwide, Rankin was the first woman ever elected to Congress. As a pacifist, she was the only legislator to vote against the United States entering both World War I and World War II. She was a champion for women's rights and a peace advocate until her death. Jeannette Rankin died in 1973.

She was truly a Montana heroine.

Source: *The Big Timber Pioneer* November 12, 1914 edition: Montana Memory Project



Jeannette Rankin

Photo courtesy: archives.gov

"The individual woman is required . . . a thousand times a day to choose either to accept her appointed role and thereby rescue her good disposition out of the wreckage of her self-respect, or else follow an independent line of behavior and rescue her self-respect out of the wreckage of her good disposition".

~ Jeannette Rankin



The role of women in agriculture is an essential thread in the fabric of Montana's settlement and history. An exciting new project by the Montana Department of Conservation (DNRC) and local conservation districts will pay tribute to farm and ranch women by preserving their stories of life on the land.

From the Ground Up will bring together young people, educators, conservation districts and community leaders. A seminar, Oral History in the Classroom, will train adults to assist students in the art of recording oral histories. Conservation Districts will identify women in the agricultural community. Educators will help guide the young people as they prepare to conduct interviews.

Along with preserving important stories of Montana's women in agriculture, *From the Ground Up* will offer young people a valuable perspective: history can be found in the day-to-day experiences of ordinary people living all around them.

For more details contact: Montana DNRC, Linda Brander, 406-444-0520.

BE A PART OF MONTANA HISTORY

Do you have a story to tell? Or do you know women with a ranching and/or agricultural background with stories that should be shared and preserved?

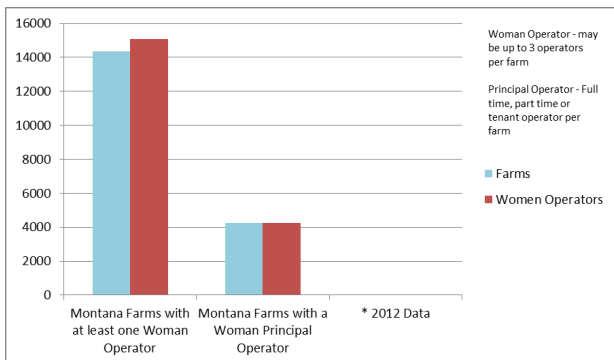
This is a call out to all McCone County women. Yes, we are asking you to step up from the background—so don't be shy! We are interested in interviewing you for the Oral History Project. It'll be just like visiting, but just with a bigger community!

Topics covered will be:

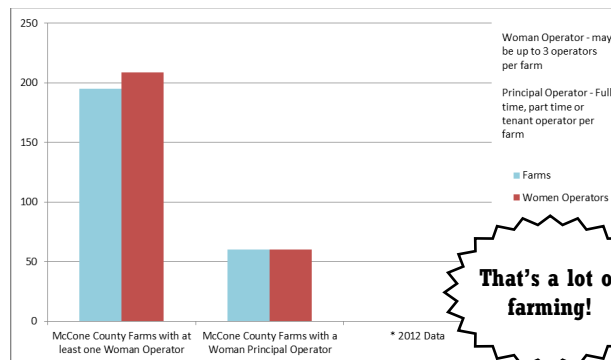
- Farm or Ranch Operations
- Family, Friends and Community
- Role of Women in Ag
- Connection to the Land
- Legacy



STATISTICS



Statistical information source: 2012 Census of Agriculture, USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service



That's a lot of farming!

In 2012, women operators helped farm 25,571,800 acres and principal women operators farmed 4,396,640 acres in Montana. In McCone County, women operators helped farmed 473,688 acres and principal women operators farmed 85,451 . acres.



A HISTORICAL WOMAN OF MCCONE COUNTY

By Mandi Nay

I have an idea
that the phrase
"weaker sex" was
coined by some
woman to disarm
some man she
was preparing to
overwhelm.
Ogden Nash

If you ask around town who would know anything and everybody from the past, Polly Wischman is the name that is often mentioned. Polly was born on October 23, 1921 at home on the farm in Circle, MT. She had one brother & one sister. She grew up on the family farm and she loved the freedom and space of living in a small community. Her father and mother emigrated from Germany. Her father Henry came to America in 1903 to work. He returned home to Germany in 1913 to retrieve Paulina who he had met previously. He asked her to marry him and offered to pay Paulina's way back to Germany if she didn't like it here. They stayed!

After graduating Circle High School in 1940, Polly went to St. Mary's and Rochester to study nursing. She has a Bachelors of Science in Nursing from MSU Bozeman. She enlisted in the U.S. Army during WWII and worked in the hospitals. She also worked at Mt. Sinai hospital in New York and the VA hospitals in Los Angeles and Miles City. She met Lou Gehrig as a patient at St. Mary's. She thought he was a very, very nice man, but also very ill. In Los Angeles, she saw a lot of movie stars. She helped start the Nursing Program at Miles Community College. For years, she was the Public Health Nurse in Circle and also worked in the Circle Nursing Home and Hospital. Before making Circle her permanent home in 1980, Polly would spend summers in Montana and winters in Chicago working as a nurse.

When asked what changes she has seen over the years, she said that the most shocking was how "the world changed after the atomic bomb was dropped." She witnessed the many breakthroughs in medicine and how the addition of antibiotics improved the quality of life. Other changes she mentioned were the transition from oil lamps to electricity and the introduction of telephones. When asked what changes she would like to see, she said..."More air travel. I always thought we would be traveling by flying saucers by now."



Her favorite community activity is being involved with the McCone County Historical Museum and the Historical Society in Circle. Her love of history was influenced by her father. Henry Wischman arrived in the Circle area in 1905 and squatted. As she grew up, he regaled her with many stories of "Old Circle" and her interest grew. Polly has written multiple books and had collected histories of Circle graduates, local cemeteries, post offices, schools and anything she found interesting in and around McCone County. She was also a long time correspondent for The Circle Banner. Thank you Polly for telling us your wonderful story and for being a part of McCone County history!

CONSERVATION DISTRICT WOMEN
OF MCCONE COUNTY**District Supervisors**

** Alice Whitmer, Evelyn Kondelik, Emily Guldberg,
Jenny Garoutte

District Administrators

** Ramona Magalsky, Anna Wolff, Cindy Loberg, Cindy
Schaffer, Evelyn Kondelik, Mary Skyberg, Jeanne Rae
Kirkegard, Penny Hager, Mary Hendrix

** Information prior to Bruce Wright's 34 year tenure and
recollection not available at press time. If you had served on
the board or was an administrator, please contact us at 406-
485-2744 x100. We would be honored to recognize your ser-
vice when we celebrate our 75th anniversary in 2017!

Although the Conservation District celebrates 72 years on
August 14th, women have been on the Board only since
1996.

In case you wondered, "just what do we do?", we do a lot!
We are mandated by the state to provide for the conserva-
tion of Montana's natural resources.

We are an office of one administrator that works for six
Supervisors. **We have 1 Rural Supervisor opening!**

We administer programs such as noxious weed control,
producer workshops, youth education, community outreach
and annual tree sales.

We assist with 310 permits, water reservations, dredging;
we undertake water quality projects such as TMDL and
DRWA; we write grants and ordinances for the District and
the county.

We are an on-the-ground conservation resource here in
McCone County representing you at the state level.

Celebrate Conservation All Month Long....August is Montana Conservation Month!





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Brant Quick, Rural Supervisor
Casey Nay, Urban Supervisor

Partner in Conservation

Johnna Blankenship, NRCS District Conservationist

DRWA

Mandi Nay, Coordinator Extraordinaire

Feminine Musings

P O N D E R I N G S

Be careful of how you are talking to yourself because you are listening.

~ Lisa M. Hayes

Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage.

~ Anais Nin

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

We are all stars and we all deserve to twinkle.

~ Marilyn Monroe

A T T I T U D E

Nothing is IMPOSSIBLE, the word itself says IM POSSIBLE.

~ Audrey Hepburn

I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship.

~ Louisa May Alcott

The question isn't who's going to let me; it's who's going to stop me.

~ Ayn Rand

Attitude determines Altitude. Winners never quit. No venture. No gain.

~ Stella Oladira

L A U G H S

The secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age.

~ Lucille Ball

If you rest, you rust.

~ Helen Hayes

Men to the left because



Women are always right.



~ Unknown (but probably a woman)

Can you imagine a world without men? No crime and lots of fat happy women.

~ Nicole Hollander