

**Milk River Watershed Alliance**  
**St Mary Project/Watershed Coordinator**

Position Description  
Valley County Conservation District

*The Milk River Watershed Alliance (MRWA) is a locally led organization of conservation districts working together to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources within the Milk River Watershed, while maintaining the quality of life.*

**Job Title:** MRWA St. Mary Project/Watershed Coordinator.

**Accountable to:** Valley County Conservation District and the Milk River Watershed Alliance.

**Status:** Full time, with a six-month probationary period.

**Position Location:** Office may be located within a local conservation district office, preferably along the highline, but other locations may be considered.

**General Position Purpose:** The MRWA is a locally led organization of conservation districts working together to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources within the Milk River watershed, while maintaining the quality of life. It is made up of five conservation districts (Glacier County, Hill County, Blaine County, Phillips, and Valley County) and various advisors. The Valley County Conservation District is the fiscal agent for MRWA and is responsible for managing funds, employing staff, and contractors on behalf of the group. The coordinator is an advocate for improving natural resource conditions of the Milk River Basin through outreach, planning and project initiatives that meet the goals of the MRWA while operating under the general direction of the MRWA Executive Board.

One of the most important and time sensitive issues in the Milk River Watershed is the aging St. Mary's diversion and the associated downstream infrastructure. This position will be responsible for working with stakeholders and partners in the Milk River Watershed to assist with planning associated with the rehabilitation of the St. Mary irrigation facilities and to conserve soil and water resources within the watershed.

**Description of Duties, Responsibilities and Tasks:**

The St. Mary rehabilitation project is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation, operated by a joint board of control, and built over 100 years ago. It is a complex water distribution system, important to Tribal governments, Canadian water users, and Montana's communities and irrigators along its course through five northern conservation districts. The coordinator will work for the MRWA to coordinate efforts of all entities involved in the St. Mary project to raise awareness of the urgent need to rehabilitate the aging facility. The main focus for the next two years will be to work with MRWA and the St. Mary Rehabilitation Working Group and other stake holders to 1) coordinate and secure resources to rehabilitate or replace the St. Mary facility for the continued diversion of water from the St. Mary River to the Milk River; 2) enhance communication with communities and water users that rely on the Milk River about the

progress and issues regarding the rehabilitation of the St. Mary project; 3) leverage additional capacity to secure long-term funding to create sustainable initiatives throughout the watershed.

Coordinator is responsible for accomplishing the following:

1. Assist in the development of NRCS funding opportunities, such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), Public Law 83-566 (PL 566) the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, and others as they relate to the Milk River Project.
2. Communication plan development and implementation to compliment efforts of entities and agencies involved in the project. The plan will be developed with conservation districts and stakeholders. It may include the process for updates to the websites, press talking points, social media strategies outreach events, newsletters or news releases, and general marketing of the St. Mary rehabilitation project. As directed by Valley County Conservation District and MWRA plans, the coordinator will represent MRWA at meetings with constituents, state, and federal leadership. The communication plan will include progress of the overall project, private lands irrigated agriculture, and the importance of the project to the overall viability of the watershed.
3. MWRA plan development to guide the efforts of the MRWA and development of strategies for implementing the plan effectively. Hosts meetings, tours, events, and carries out other outreach activities as directed in the communication plan.
4. Partnership coordination to develop and maintain working relationships with the St. Mary Rehabilitation Group, MRWA, NRCS, DNRC, other state and federal agencies, tribal governments, landowners, recreational groups, irrigation groups, and other stakeholders to support conservation activities associated with the St. Mary rehabilitation project. Attends CD and other state, regional, and federal level advisory group meetings to provide updates and seek input on MRWA planning efforts.
5. Financial and administrative management to accomplish the goals of MRWA, including grant writing, budget management, contractor selection, and grant reporting. Drafting policies and procedures, agreements and guidelines for operation and financing of MRWA, and provides report budget reports to Valley County Conservation District and MRWA.

**Supervision Received:** The Valley County Conservation District, on behalf of the MWRA, is the employer of this position. The Valley County Conservation District sets the policy for all employment related issues such as hiring, pay, benefits, and employment policy. The coordinator receives direction from and answers to the MRWA and the Valley County Conservation District for the accomplishment of the goals outlined in this position description. MRWA will meet quarterly to review progress, make decisions to refine and revise goals and objectives. The coordinator is responsible for gathering input and direction from the MRWA but makes independent decisions about how to proceed with the work

plan. Coordinator must seek approval from both the Valley County Conservation District and the MRWA prior to implementing funding raising strategies.

**Qualifications:**

Knowledge, skills, and abilities: The application must possess experience and interest in the issues affecting rural Montana and natural resources management on a watershed scale. The applicant must be goal oriented and able to work independently with limited supervision, possess excellent communication skills, have the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships, ability to write and manage grants, ability to use computers for word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and mapping. A demonstrated ability to plan and implement complex natural resource projects, river resource management issues, and the role of local involvement, including conservation districts, in these issues is desirable. **The ability to communicate and develop partnerships is required.**

Education and Experience: An ideal candidate would possess a minimum of a Bachelor of Science or higher degree in a Natural Resource or Environmental Science, Business Management, Public Relations, or equivalent. Training and/or experience in consensus building is desired. At least five years' experience in a position with duties related to those described herein is desired. An equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered.

**Terms of Employment:**

The coordinator is an employee of the Valley County Conservation District. Travel throughout the watershed, especially to the counties of Hill, Blaine, Phillips, Glacier and Valley Counties. Many conservation district meetings are in the evenings. Occasional out-of-state travel as well as occasional travel to other parts of the state may be required

**Travel reimbursement:** The coordinator must have transportation, a valid driver's license and proof of vehicle liability insurance. The employee will be reimbursed for travel expenses and mileage at the state reimbursement rate.

**Compensation:** Hourly wages in the range of \$26-\$29 hour depending on qualifications.

**Benefits:**

- Paid state holidays
- Vacation and sick leave
- Group Medical Benefits
- Public Employees Retirement