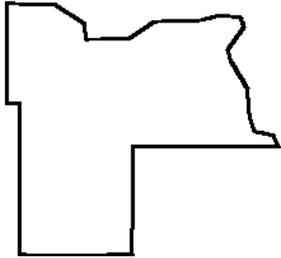


MERCER COUNTY



SOIL CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Conservation News



Volume 33 No 3 1400 Hwy 49 N #102, Beulah, ND 58523 October 2013

2013 Conservation Achievement Award Winners

Warren & Jodie Woroniecki



The Woroniecki's will be guests of the Mercer County SCD at the NDASCD Annual Meeting in Fargo. They will receive an aerial colored photo of their farmstead. We extend our congratulations to the Woroniecki's for their outstanding work in conserving our natural resources.

Warren and Jodie Woroniecki's ranch is located in the southwestern corner of Mercer County. The Woroniecki's converted CRP fields into a three pasture prescribed grazing system. They rotate June calving heifers and mares from their working cow horse program through this system. The Woroniecki's also run their main cow herd through an intensive nine pasture rotation that includes three water systems with one solar unit. Pollinator and tree plantings have been utilized to restore the natural ecosystem on their land. This year they installed a one mile living snow fence to protect the county road running by their operation.





Cost Share for Tree Plantings Available

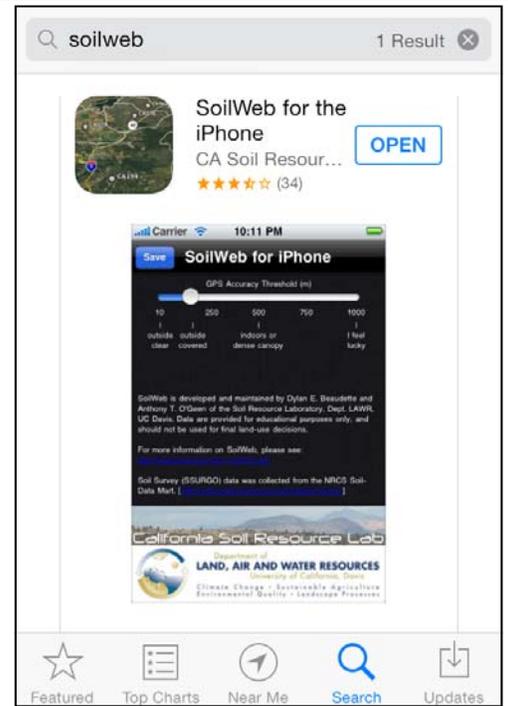
Now is the time to think about tree planting for next spring. There are several cost share opportunities available from NRCS & ND Forest Service. If you are planning a machine planting, the ground needs to be worked as soon as possible. Please contact Dawn at the SCD office to get your tree plantings planned 701-873-2101 ext 3.

Smartphone App for Soil Information

A new smartphone application, or “app,” is available as a free download for both iPhone and Android users to access soil survey information. The app, SoilWeb, combines online NRCS soil survey information with the GPS capabilities of smartphones.

SoilWeb can retrieve a graphic summary of soil types in the form of soil profile sketches. Clicking on soil sketches sends the user to the corresponding Official Series Description, a user-friendly narrative of commonly used soil properties such as horizon depths, colors, texture and rock fragment content. Clicking on a soil name (listed above each sketch) provides the user with a more detailed description, including: physical and chemical properties, definitions and links to a variety of environmental databases. Because the app provides soil survey information in a mobile form, it is particularly useful for those working in the field.

This SoilWeb app means that a farmer, rancher or even a backyard gardener could use a smartphone to gain an understanding of the soil type in the surrounding landscape.



8th Grade Soil & Water Conservation Tour



The District held its annual 8th grade Soil and Water Conservation Tour. Beulah and Hazen Middle Schools attended with 96 students participating. Students were taken to various soil and water conservation practice sites. Tour guide presentation topics included proper range management, benefits of tree windbreaks, beneficial wildlife habitat, soil health and water quality. The high test score winners were:

Hazen Middle School: Sameer Knopik, Mckenzie Walter, Josh Bitterman, and Kale Stroup (Picture to the left)

Beulah Middle School: Torie Horning, Jase Sailer, Cassidee Suko, Michael Schmidt, Dillon Schramm, Mikey Morris, and Skyler Meyer



2014 Apple Tree Varieties

MCSCD is offering the following apple tree varieties for ordering. These trees are approximately 5-6 feet in height and are \$17.50 each. They will be available the end of April. If you are interested in ordering trees please contact the office at 873-2101 ext. 3.

Red McIntosh: One of the most popular apples. Bright to dark red skin over white flesh.

Liberty: Medium to large shiny red fruit. Good fresh, cooked or canned. Excellent



Spring Creek Watershed

Cost Share is available for a variety of conservation practices in the Spring Creek Watershed. Many practices are available for cost share: fence, pipelines, well, water tanks, shelter belts, grass and hayland plantings, cover crops, riparian forest buffer, grazing system along stream banks and many more.

There is no application deadline to sign-up. Just stop by and discuss your plans with us. We would be happy to help! Everyone is welcome to apply, large and small operations! Funding is available into 2015.

UPDATE!

Kasha just met with the ND Game and Fish and there may be additional funding in the future. They are interested in producers who water cattle out of Spring Creek and are thinking about adding a tank to improve water quality. There may also be another source of funds with the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). The deadline to submit for OHF is December 2. If you have been thinking about adding to your operation or want more information, please stop in or call Kasha at 873-2101 ext 3.



Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) Deadline is November 15, 2013

Cost Share Is Available For:

- Cross Fencing, Pipelines, Tanks
- Tree Renovations & Establishment
- No Till
- Cover Crops
- Critical Area Plantings
- Range Plantings
- Well Decommissioning and much more!

Mercer County will also be participating in the following National funding pools: On-Farm Energy, Seasonal High Tunnels, and Organic.



Fall Tree Care - Winterizing your trees

Below are a few steps to help your young trees make it through the winter. We understand these are not all possible to do in shelter belts, but it will give you some ideas to help your trees out.

Fall Watering: Even though this spring was very wet throughout most of ND, watering your trees this fall is very important, especially for trees planted within the past five years. It is recommended to provide between five to ten gallons of water per week, per inch diameter of your tree (for example, a tree that is three inches in diameter should get at least 15 gallons of water per week, or about five gallons every second day). Tree roots will continue to absorb water until soil temperatures drop below 40 degrees for a consistent time period, so watering after trees have dropped their leaves continues to be beneficial. If you decide to water your larger trees, water further away from the trunk focusing on the drip line, the area below the outer circumference of the tree's branches.

Mulch: Spreading a four-inch-thick layer of organic mulch around the base of newer plantings helps maintain soil moisture levels.

Raking and Pruning: Collecting and properly disposing of dead leaves, branches and other plant material in the fall is key to reducing the severity of leaf diseases in your yard for the following year that can harm the aesthetics and health of your trees.

Shade and Protect Your Trees: Preventing winter burn (drying out of fine branches and needles) in conifers and sunscald (bark cracking and injury from intense sunlight) on the trunks of thin-barked trees is important for preserving tree health. Shade your conifers with a constructed burlap sun block on its south side or loosely wrap trees with burlap to prevent winter burn. Wrapping the trunk of younger trees with a light-colored tree guard not only prevents sunscald, but also protects trees from rodent feeding damage that can girdle and kill trees.

For more information, contact your nearest North Dakota Forest Service office or Forest Health Specialist Aaron Bergdahl at (701) 231-5138. North Dakota Forest Service is on Facebook! Like the North Dakota Forest Service on Facebook www.facebook.com/NorthDakotaForestService for updates on tree insects and diseases, tree species selection and other useful information about the tree

Mercer County SCD
1400 Hwy 49 N # 102
Beulah, ND 58523
Phone 873-2101

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

District programs are available to all people, regardless of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or marital status.

Livestock Tour

In September NRCS and MCSCD held an informational tour in Golden Valley. Information was presented on NRCS and watershed programs and a Southwest water update. Carlee Elke talked about windbreak panels and Mike Gerbig presented on soil health and water infiltration.



IMPORTANT DATES:

Oct 31 - Happy Halloween
Nov 4 - SCD board meeting 8:00 am
Nov 11 - Veterans Day - Office closed
Nov 15 - EQIP application deadline
Nov 17-19 - NDASCD Annual Convention, Fargo
Nov 28 - Thanksgiving - Office closed
Dec 9 - SCD board meeting 8:00 am
Dec 25 - Christmas, Office closed
Jan 1 - New Year's Day, Office closed

WANTED - MITIGATION ACRES

The Mercer County Water Resource Board is seeking to acquire wetland acres necessary to replace an area that they wish to drain for public safety. There are two ways they can accomplish this: work with you to restore a former wetland, or create a new one. The most ideal situation would be if you have a wetland area that was drained in the past, but you now want to restore it—for wildlife reasons or stock use. However, if you have an area that might be suitable for a small dam that could offer both temporary flood storage and a permanent pool, this might also provide the necessary mitigation acres for the Board and some utility to you the producer. Call the Board's secretary, Greg Lange, at 701.748.2206 if you are willing to explore either option.



“Conservation in Action”

Featuring High Plains Concepts

Submitted by Carlee Elke, NRCS Soil Conservationist

High Plains Concepts of Beulah, ND recently installed a seasonal high tunnel through the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program’s (EQIP) Seasonal High Tunnels special initiative. High Plains Concept’s conservation objective was to extend the growing season in an environmentally safe manner by installing a seasonal high tunnel structure.

A seasonal high tunnel is a polyethylene covered structure with no electrical, ventilation, or heating system which modifies the climate in the tunnel to extend the growing season in an environmentally safe manner. Many conservation benefits are associated with these structures: (1) improved plant quality, (2) improved soil quality, (3) improved water quality through methods such as reduced nutrient and pesticide transport, (4) improved air quality through reduced transportation inputs and (5) reduced energy use through local consumption of the crops produced.

Mr. Gaylen Sailer, owner of High Plains Concepts, installed the seasonal high tunnel this spring with the help of his employees. Cabbage, tomatoes, broccoli, eggplant, brussels sprouts, and green peppers were planted in late May. He believes that they could’ve planted their spring vegetable crop a month earlier with the help of the seasonal high tunnel. Mr. Sailer sold many of the vegetables grown in the high tunnel to High Plains Concept’s customers and has donated items to the church he attends. Mr. Sailer hopes the high tunnel will develop into a Farmer’s Market opportunity in the future.

The structure has proven to be experimental and challenging at times but Mr. Sailer said “it looks good and is operational.” Soon after the tunnel was established, hail damaged the roof. Monitoring the heat in the structure is critical and has become the major challenge. For now, Mr. Sailer leaves the doors open so it doesn’t get too hot and uses the texturing method to determine soil moisture levels to prevent over watering and vegetable rot. The weed barrier that High Plains Concepts purchased through the Mercer County Soil Conservation District keeps the weeds down and the soil moisture up for the crop.

Cost share applies to seasonal high tunnel structures that are purchased and installed after an EQIP contract is signed. NRCS will provide cost share for seasonal high tunnels up to 2201 sq. ft. in size. Please stop by the Beulah Field Office to sign an application today! The next application deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is November 15, 2013. Please contact the Beulah Field Office at 701-873-2101 Ext 3 if you have any questions.



Gaylen Sailer, owner of High Plains Concepts, standing in his newly constructed seasonal high tunnel. The seasonal high tunnel was cost shared by the NRCS through EQIP and extends the regular growing season through the winter months.



Congratulations!
Lori Gustafson, our District Conservationist, got hitched.
She is now Lori Klein.
We wish Lori and Mark the best!

