

CONSERVATION NEWS

MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Volume 22, no 2

Long Term Fabric Maintenance

Earlier in the fall I was called by a landowner who was having problems with his trees. For no obvious reason, his pine trees were falling over without much wind. I went and looked, and these were healthy looking trees that were simply breaking off at the ground and toppling over. There were no obvious signs of disease, and the landowner said that when the trees were planted that no fabric was applied. There was a thick stand of grass throughout the planting, and no signs of anything that could cause this problem. Baffled, I called the state forester to take another look with me.

We returned a week or so later, and he commented that these were healthy looking trees that shouldn't just be tipping over like this. He suggested we dig down and take a look at the roots to see if there was anything abnormal going on underground, and so we grabbed our shovels and started digging. Suddenly, the cause became quite clear- After digging down about 6 inches, we found a layer of old, forgotten fabric that was now girdling the trunk of the tree, causing it to be weak and snap off simply due to the weight of the tree and a little bit of wind.

This is a problem we don't see very often, but the fear is that this will start happening more and more often. The use of weed barrier fabric became much more prevalent in the last 10 or 15 years, with the thought that the fabric was biodegradable. This is wrong however, as the fabric is photodegradable- that is, it is broken down by light. The problem is that as the tree gets bigger, the amount of light that reaches the fabric decreases, effectively preserving it. So, what is a person to do?

The best thing is to monitor the base of the trunk as the tree grows, and using a knife cut the hole in the fabric open wider to allow for more growth. Alternatively, after 5-7 years the fabric could just be removed. Either way, it is very important to make sure soil and debris are kept off of the fabric. Allowing soil and debris on top not only helps weeds and grass grow, therefore making it worthless, but it makes it much easier to forget about and problems like the one described earlier. Make sure if you mow that you aren't blowing all your clippings onto the fabric, and try to avoid tilling around the trees at all costs. Not only does this put soil on the fabric, but it also damages the tree roots and removes some of the moisture from the soil- a commodity that we all know can be very valuable in the hot summer months.



Fabric opening girdled trunk



Healthy tree toppled. Girdled trunk

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SCD Supervisors:

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Aaron Steckler

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Don Tanaka
Travis Wolf
Travis Rossow

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Brandon Schafer
Adam Pachl

NRCS Personnel:

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Paula Kvernum
Sharon Potts-Sayler
Melissa McCann

Farm Bill Specialist:

Sarah Hamilton

New Farm Bill Specialist in the Mandan FO



Hello, I'm Sarah Hamilton, and I'm your new Farm Bill Specialist for Morton, Burleigh, Oliver, and Sheridan Counties. My job is to provide technical and programmatic assistance to producers in voluntary Farm Bill Conservation Programs such as CRP, EQIP, and CSP. I grew up in Alabama and frequently visited my grandfather's farm where I developed an appreciation for farmers, ranchers, and private landownership. I received my Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Science from Auburn University and my Master's Degree in Renewable Natural Resources with a concentration in Wildlife Science from Louisiana State University. After graduation, I accepted a position with an environmental consulting firm in Bismarck. I enjoy hiking, kayaking, fishing, and traveling.

I am excited to be working with the Soil Conservation Districts, and I look forward to working with farmers and ranchers on conservation practices! If you have any questions or want to learn more about the Farm Bill Programs offered through your local NRCS office, contact me or stop by the office anytime.

New Advisory Supervisor on Morton County SCD Board



I, Travis Rossow, have been appointed as an advisory member to our Morton County SCD Board. I live south of Flasher with my wife, Jessica, and two children raising cash crops and cattle. Over the years we have been implementing no-till and cover crop practices on our land. Converting from traditional tillage to no-till allowed us to conserve water and began to improve our soil health. By planting cover crops, we were able to provide additional grazing and haying opportunities. It is very beneficial to keep something growing as long as possible in the soil and allow cattle to provide back to the land. We are learning every year by attending events provided by our local NRCS and SCD offices. There is still much to learn yet regarding improving soil health, so I look forward to working with your Morton County SCD board and staff to improve our land in Morton County.



Update for the O-M-G Grassland Improvement Project



As some of you may know, the Oliver, Morton, and Grant County Soil Districts received a grant from the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund to improve our grasslands by cost-sharing infrastructure for grazing systems at a 60% rate. Some of these cost-shared items include cross-fences, livestock water developments, and grass plantings.

We recently held our 2nd batching period which brought our total of approved applications to well over 25 projects!

We plan to have a 3rd batching period this fall for projects that would start in 2018 and be completed by the end of 2019. If you are interested and would like more details, call the Morton County SCD office at 701-667-1163 ext. 3.

The Importance of Changing Season of Use and Having a Grazing System



RECOVERY/REST PERIOD GUIDELINES:		
Rangeland		
	<i>fast growth May-June</i>	<i>slow growth July-August</i>
Western North Dakota (MLRA's 53, 54, 58)	minimum of 45 days	minimum of 65 days
Under drought conditions, recovery periods may need to be extended to 90 days or longer.		
Tame (cool season) pasture		
	<i>fast growth May-June</i>	<i>slow growth July-August</i>
Western North Dakota (MLRA's 53, 54, 58)	minimum of 25 days	minimum of 35 days

It is about this time of year that we all sit down to plan our grazing rotation for the year. Sometimes our rotation is the same rotation that we have used for years and it works great. Here are some things to think about when you are designing your rotation for the year:

Did you change where you started?

Are you providing each pasture with enough time to recover?

Changing what season you graze is especially important for the health of your rangeland. It is ok to start in the same pasture every year if it is mostly tame grass (ex. crested wheatgrass smooth brome). With native rangeland you want to make sure you are changing when you graze that area. Grazing rangeland at the same time every year will favor certain species and those may not be the species you want to favor. Changing when you graze will benefit all of the species so it is not always the same species getting grazed each year at the same time. Changing the timing of when you graze can help increase your plant diversity which can benefit your livestock and your land.

Another important thing to remember is to give your pasture and rangeland enough time to recover after it has been grazed. If you are continuously grazing your vegetation to the ground and not giving it enough time to recover you can actually be doing harm to your land. Eventually not allowing enough time to recover may kill off several species. This may also favor plant species that you do not want to favor. No matter how you look at it not providing enough recovery time for your vegetation is bad for both your land and your livestock.

Having a grazing plan can assist you with both of these issues. NRCS can provide technical assistance with creating a plan that is beneficial for you and your land. We want to assist you with getting the most out of your land while improving the health of your land. If you have any questions or would like assistance with a grazing plan please feel free to stop into the office or call us at 701-667-1163 Ext. 3.

10' No-Till Grass Drill Available for Rent



Within the last few months the Morton County SCD has purchased a 10' Truax Grass Drill. This wouldn't have been possible without the help of the ND Game and Fish Department and the US Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Aid funds under the Wildlife Restoration Act (CFDA# 15.611). With the help of these two agencies we can now provide this service to Morton County. Minimum charge of \$100. Rental rate is \$10/acre and \$50 delivery fee. Morton SCD can provide the tractor and driver for \$17/acre.

For more details, please call the office at 701-667-1163 ext. 3.

Kuhn Manure Spreader for Rent



The District is also renting a Kuhn Knight 160 manure spreader with vertical beaters to the producers of Morton County. Unlike conventional/horizontal beaters, vertical beaters have a 25-30 foot spread pattern giving an even spread of livestock manure or compost over a field.

Producers can lease the spreader for \$275/day. Clean-up and maintenance will be the responsibility of the producer. The producer is responsible for the cost of labor and repairs or replacement parts for any damage while the manure spreader is in the producer's care, custody, and control. Soil and manure tests are required for a Nutrient Management Plan.

If you have any questions, or would like to lease the spreader, please contact the Morton County SCD at 667-1163 ext. 3.

Northern Plains Grasslands Symposium

July 19 and 20, 2017

Presenting: Allan Savory

Resource Management on a Working Ranch—Day 1

Wednesday, July 19th—1:00pm-4:00pm CDT

\$20.00 Registration Fee Please RSVP by July 13th, 2017

Black Leg Ranch - Jerry & Renae Doan Family - 24401 62nd Ave. SE., McKenzie, ND 58572

Directions: From I-94 take Exit 176 (McKenzie), proceed 7 miles south, turn east on 62nd Ave. SE and proceed for 1 mile to reach Black Leg Ranch Headquarters

Agenda:

- ◆ Ranch Overview - Jerry Doan
- ◆ Recognition - Mary Podoll, ND State Conservationist
- ◆ “Restoring Perennial Grasslands to support People, Crops, & Wildlife”—with Byron Shelton & Allan Savory
- ◆ Ranch Tour

How Livestock & Grassland Soils Can Save Civilization

Wednesday, July 19th—6:30pm-9:00pm CDT

No Registration Fee Please RSVP by July 13th, 2017

ND Heritage Center Auditorium - 612 E Boulevard Ave, Bismarck, ND 58501

Directions to ND Heritage Center: From I-94 exit 159, head South on US-83 and State Street in Bismarck, ND for .9 miles and turn west into the capital grounds towards the ND Heritage Center and park in East lot.

Agenda:

- ◆ Opening/Introduction
- ◆ “How Livestock & Grassland Soils Can Save Civilization” - Allan Savory
- ◆ Q&A / Discussion
- ◆ Reception



Resource Management on a Working Ranch—Day 2

Thursday, July 20th—9:30am-1:00pm CDT

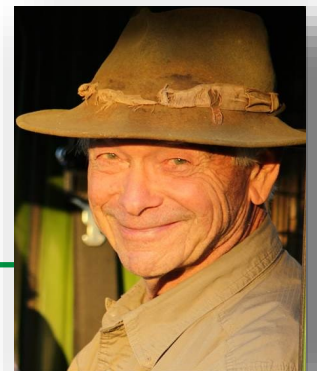
\$30.00 Registration Fee—Lunch Provided Please RSVP by July 13th, 2017

Miller Ranch—Ken & Bonnie Miller - 5705 Highway 1806 Fort Rice, ND 58554

Directions: From Main Street in Mandan, ND—Turn South onto 6th Ave. SE and continue on ND –1806 for 23.3 miles and turn right off of ND –1806 for .4 miles to reach Ken Miller Headquarters.

Agenda:

- ◆ Ranch Overview - Ken Miller
- ◆ Recognition - Mary Podoll, ND State Conservationist
- ◆ “Restoring Perennial Grasslands to support People, Crops, & Wildlife”—with Byron Shelton & Allan Savory
- ◆ Ranch Tour



How to Register for any/all of Savory's Events:

Online: www.eventbrite.com (Search “Allan Savory”) Credit Cards Accepted Online

Phone: (701) 250-4518 ext. 3 (Cash or Check Payment on the Day of the Event)

Email: Lucinda.Makedonski@nd.nacdn.net (Cash or Check Payment on the Day of the Event)

Please make checks payable to: “Burleigh County SCD”

Event Partners: Burleigh County SCD, Morton County SCD,
Dakota Prairies RC&D Council, and ND Grazing Lands Coalition

Midwest Bugfest July 12-13, 2017

Presenting: Dr. Jonathan Lundgren, Entomologist

Trading Biodiversity for Pest Problems

Wednesday, July 12, 2017 6:00pm - 8:00pm CDT *No Registration Fee or RSVP Required*

Bismarck State College - National Energy Center of Excellence - Bavendick Room - 1200 Schafer Street Bismarck, ND 58501

Agenda:

- o Opening/Introduction
- o Trading Biodiversity for Pest Problems - Dr. Jonathan Lundgren
- o Q&A/Discussion

Entomology and Agricultural Landscapes

Thursday, July 13, 2017 1:00pm - 4:00pm CDT *No Registration Fee or RSVP Required*

Menoken Farm - 1107 171st Street N.E. Menoken, ND 58558

Directions: From I-94, take Menoken Exit 170, drive 1 mile south to Highway 10, head East for 1 mile to St. Hildegard's Church, then 1/2 mile South to reach Menoken Farm.

Agenda:

- o Opening/Introduction
- o Crop and Pasture Walk—Identify Pests & Beneficials in Live Ecosystems—Dr. Lundgren
- o Q&A/Discussion



Menoken Farm Garden Tour

Thursday, July 13, 2017 6:00pm - 8:00pm CDT - Dinner to Follow **Please RSVP by July 7, 2017 No Registration Fee**

Menoken Farm - 1107 171st Street N.E. Menoken, ND 58558

Garden Tour Topics & Speakers:

- o Entomology— Dr. Jonathan Lundgren
- o Pollinators—Darrell Oswald, Chad Thorson & Adam Pacht— SCD Technicians
- o Hugelkultur—Derek Lowstuter—Forest Restoration Specialist, ND Forest Service
- o Soils—Jay Fuhrer—Soil Health Specialist, NRCS

Sponsored by: Burleigh County SCD, Morton County SCD, &
Dakota Prairies RC&D Council

How to Register for Menoken Farm Garden Tour:

Phone: (701) 250-4518 ext. 3

Email: Lucinda.Makedonski@nd.nacdn.net

Feedlot Tour to Visit Western ND Facilities

The 15th annual NDSA Feedlot Tour will be June 20 at feedlots near Center; Stanton; Hebron; and Richardton. The day-long tour will include stops at Rocky Valley Ranch; Price Farm and Ranch; Wanner Feedlot; and Beaver Creek Ranch. Bus transportation will be provided to and from the stops. The bus will depart from the Bismarck K-Mart parking lot at 8 a.m. CT and return at approximately 5:30 p.m. CT.

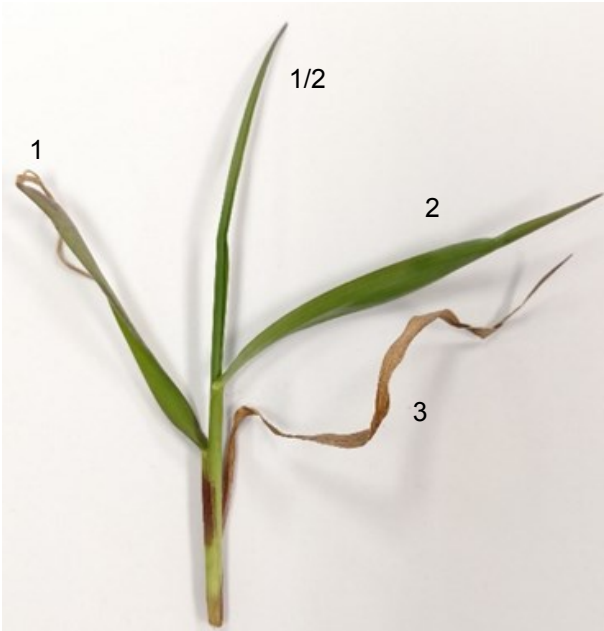
Here's a tour preview:

- ◆ Rocky Valley Ranch near Center is the tour's first stop. Rob Schmidt and family operate the facility. The custom backgrounding and heifer development feedlot was newly constructed and permitted in 2008 for 999 head. The Rocky Valley Ranch feedlot features continuous steel fence, trough type water tanks, super steel windbreak with guardrail bottoms and a cowboy alley out the back of pens.
- ◆ Price Farm and Ranch near Stanton is the tour's second stop. Steve and Linda Price and their son Cole operate the newly updated facility in 2012. The Price's primarily finish cattle in its permitted 840 head feedlot. The operation features cable feedlot fence, concrete heavy-use pads, and custom designed processing facility with adjustable alleyway and roof.
- ◆ The Wanner Feedlot near Hebron is the third tour stop. Dave Wanner and son Greg operate the backgrounding operation. Permitted in 2012 for 999 head, the facility includes well drained pens, rubber tire waterers, and a curblin feeding system with adjustable neck rail. The operation also houses a state of the art processing facility utilizing the Bud Box concept and a double alleyway.
- ◆ The final tour stop is Beaver Creek Ranch owned and operated by the Phillip Messer Family. Newly expanded in 2011, the backgrounding facility is permitted for 999 head. The operation features large, well drained pens, curblin feeding system, and ability to multi-sort several ways after processing.
- ◆ The NDSA Feedlot Tour, a project of the NDSA Feeder Council, includes a noon lunch at the Dave Wanner stop. Pre-registration is not a requirement, but it is appreciated for planning purposes.

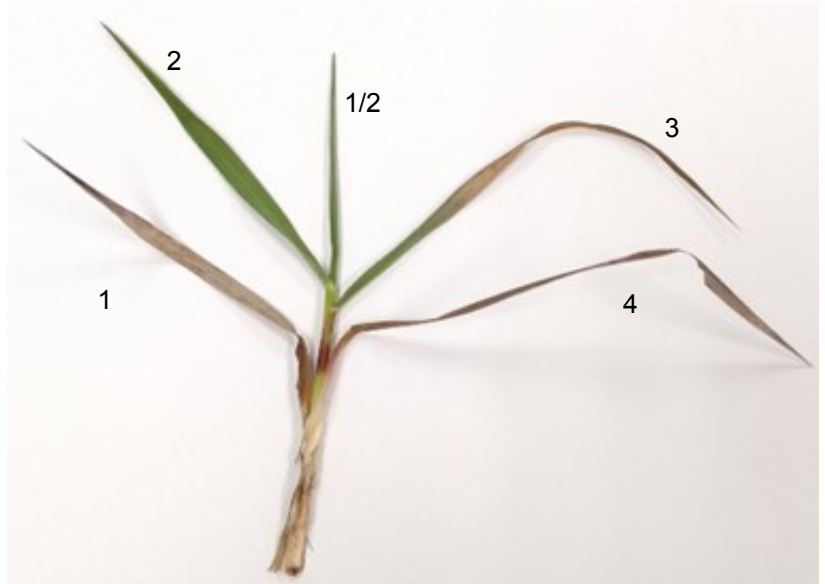
To pre-register, contact NDSA Environmental Services Director Scott Ressler at (701) 223-2522 or email Scott at sressler@ndstockmen.org.

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GRAZE!

Grazing readiness and the timing of pasture turn out takes into account many factors. Native range grazed too early can reduce forage production for the entire growing season. Always start spring grazing on your domestic cool season grass pasture which are generally ready 2-3 weeks earlier than the native range. Most native pastures are ready toward the end of May. Using June 1 as a start date is still a good GENERAL answer when asked the question of “when should you start grazing”. However, that is not the answer for everyone. The best answer for each individual land is “It depends”. We know that every area is different and the best answer is to know your land. Go out and look at the grass in your pasture. When the domestic grass hits the “three leaf stage” then it should be fine to put the cattle out in the pasture. The “leaf stages” are pictured below.



Picture 1: This is an example of a 3.5 leaf stages.



Picture 2: This is an example of a 4.5 leaf stages.

ND Youth Range Camp 2017

The Primary goal of Youth Range Camp is to teach the basic principles of range management, especially related to livestock and wildlife. We hope that the participants will acquire an understanding of the complex nature of the interactions and relationships between rangeland resources and other resources and uses.

Youth Range Camp is held at Hanson's Logging Cabin Ranch 16 miles north of Amidon. A detailed program will be sent to campers. For further information, contact Kevin Sedivec at (701) 231-7647 or kevin.sedivec@ndsu.edu.

Youth Range Camp runs from Tuesday, June 20, through Friday, June 23. The cost for attending the camp is \$140. Sign-up deadline is June 14, 2017.

The Morton County SCD Board would like to sponsor 5 Morton County students who attend the camp in 2017. The Morton County SCD will cover \$100 per selected student who submits the sponsorship application form, which can be found on www.mcscd.com. The board will review each sponsorship application essay portion and select 5 students to sponsor. Please send your sponsorship form to Beth by June 14th, 2017. Please mail to Morton County SCD 2540 Overlook Lane Mandan, ND 58554 or email the form to beth.mccleary@nd.nacdnet.net. Please call Beth at (701) 667-1163 ext. 101 for any questions.

MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2540 OVERLOOK LANE
MANDAN, ND 58554-1593

www.mcscd.com

Phone: 701-667-1163 ext. 3

Non-Profit Organization

U. S. POSTAGE

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BISMARCK, ND

Permit No. 433

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

All Programs and Services of the Soil Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age, or handicap.

2017 Sponsors

The Morton County Soil Conservation District would like to thank the following sponsors:

Flasher Farmers Union Grain—Flasher, ND
Mandan Moose Lodge—Mandan, ND
Agassiz Seed & Supply—Mandan, ND
Fraternal Order of Eagles—Mandan, ND
Pinehurst Veterinary Hospital—Bismarck, ND
Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Flasher Community Credit Union—Flasher, ND
Gartner Seed Farm—Mandan, ND
Western Cooperative Credit Union—Hebron, ND
Farm Credit Services of Mandan
Pulse USA, Inc.—Bismarck, ND
Runway Heating & Air LLC—Mandan, ND
Chesak Seed House—Bismarck, ND
Starion Financial—Mandan, ND
Dakota Community Bank—Mandan, ND
K2S Engineering Inc.—Ypsilanti, ND
Earth Energy & Water Systems, Inc.—New Salem, ND
PAN AG—Mandan, ND

UPCOMING EVENTS

June

8th—SCD Board Meeting @ USDA Service Center, Mandan
20th—Feedlot Tour - Western North Dakota Facilities

July

4th—Independence Day Holiday—Office Closed
12th—Jonathan Lundgren Presentation @ BSC
13th—Jonathan Lundgren Garden Tour @ Menoken Farm
13th—SCD Board Meeting @ USDA Service Center, Mandan
19th—Allan Savory Presentation @ Black Leg Ranch
19th—Allan Savory Presentation @ ND Heritage Center
20th—Allan Savory Presentation @ Ken & Bonnie Miller Ranch