



Conservation News

Achievement Winner

The Morton County Soil Conservation District is proud to present their Conservation Achievement Winner: Matthew & Lisa Rebenitsch, Gumbo Flats Ranch. The family works 7000 acres in Fort Rice, ND and has utilized EQIP and CSP programs through which they implemented solar wells and cover crops. They attribute these practices for bringing them through the 2021 drought and breaking up their hardpan and putting organic matter back into their fields. Matthew & Lisa have four children : Tristan, Elizabeth, Maverick, and Sawyer.



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Insert—Tree order form

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Is it just dirt? Or Soil?



Soil is the comprised of the “living ” component, made up of a whole collection of living organisms; this allows [plants](#) to live and thrive .Soil is formed as bedrock, and mountain stones and gets broken down over hundreds of years due to different kinds of weather, like rain and wind. Animals, [plants](#), and bacteria also play their parts in contributing to the creation of soil. Soil has many ecosystems inside of it, each composed of a multitude of insects and micro-organisms that move nutrients around .

Dirt is comprised of organic matter, but it is technically dead The matter that makes up dirt includes rocks, sand, silt, and clay, among other things. However, something that dirt doesn't have is the nutrients and minerals. Dirt also has no established structural integrity, and this is the reason that it doesn't compact if you add water to the mixture. Since dirt is dead and has no nutrients, it does not allow life to prosper.



Tree of the quarter—Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)

The Hackberry is a medium sized deciduous tree native to North Dakota and is a good replacement for the American Elm due to its similar form and adaptability. It has gray, stucco-like bark commonly with yellow streaks. These trees have a medium to fast growth rate with a mature height of 50-70 feet. The leaves begin as a dark green and in autumn change to a golden yellow. The fruit is berry like and changes from green to a purple or reddish brown in autumn and remains on the tree throughout winter, commonly eaten by birds and other mammal wildlife.

This tree has a hardiness down to soil zone 2, with best soil properties being sandy loams to clay, but does tolerate other types. Full sun to partial sun aids this tree in growth, therefore most regions for light will be suitable. The hackberry tree has medium tolerance for drought as well as flooding, making this a hearty choice for our region.



Manure Solutions

By Ryan Kobilansky

Fall is here and the Morton County SCD manure spreader is getting busy again. As producers begin to catch up on what's been a hectic season, they're looking to get the corrals cleaned out before winter. The vertical spreader does an excellent job of distributing manures evenly across the landscape, but do you ever wonder if there's an easier way? Livestock producers may be interested to learn that the SCD has cost-share available for producers who are interested in moving from a confined lot style of wintering system to what's called a partial containment manure management system. In this style of system, producers will rotate their cattle around fields throughout the winter and feed cattle out on the landscape.

Interested producers must be willing to commit to a schedule and conduct rotations of feeding areas throughout the winter. Cattle must be fed on either hay or cropland and cannot be wintered on native prairie rangelands. The 319 project can provide cost-share to develop winter watering systems to facilitate the transition. This can include wells, pipelines, windbreak panels, tree shelterbelts, fencing, and insulated winter tanks. In contrast to a feedlot style setup, these systems benefit water quality by dispersing manures across the same fields a producer would often haul onto. Producers will benefit by seeing a savings of labor, fuel, time, and healthier cattle. Contact the Watershed Coordinator for more information.

WELCOME- NEW DISTRICT TECHNICIAN!

By Ethan Gress



Hello, my name is Ethan Gress and I am the new District technician for the Morton County Soil Conservation. My endeavors with the Soil Conservation District started this past spring working as a part of the tree planting crew. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the District so far and am excited for what is yet to come. I feel now that I have more of a role in the community and this is a good opportunity for the people of Morton County to learn a bit about me.

I grew up on a family farm out of town west of Mandan, and have been here in Morton County all my life other than the last two school years. I was in Grand Forks going to school at the University of North Dakota. The two years in Grand Forks taught me a lot about life and what I want to do with mine, and I am very thankful for all the good lessons I learned there. I was given the opportunity to join the tree planting crew last spring by the previous District Technician and do not regret a single thing about accepting the offer.

Tree planting season starts towards the end of spring with planting the trees and leans into the middle of the summer with the weed barrier fabric being installed. Given that I accepted the District Technician position, we do not currently have anyone as a part of the tree crew. The District will be hiring for 3 positions on the tree crew before the next tree season and we would appreciate it if we had many applicants. We will be hiring for a summer intern, tree planter, and tractor driver. All three of these positions will assist in their own way during the tree season. Thanks and hope to see some of you apply for our next tree season!

Facts About Soil

- ♦ A handful of soil has more living organisms than there are people on the planet Earth
- ♦ There are more than 70,000 kinds of soil in the US



- ♦ Good soil makes our air easier to breath
- ♦ Reduces pollution by the flow of sediment into rivers
- ♦ UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said without health soils, 'life on Earth would be unsustainable.'

SUSTAINABILITY

By Malissa McKee

Sustainable: “of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting, or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged.” - Merriam-Webster



How can one bring sustainability to their farming operation? Here are 8 concepts from Jeanine Davis, associate professor and extension specialist in the Department of Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University.

1) Protect and build your soil

**erosion control*

**planting cover crops*

**adding organic matter*

**investigate potential long term impacts on soil/soil like when applying products*

2) Protect your water

3) Protect native plants, animals, insects, and microbial life

4) Make time for yourself

**agriculture is not a sustainable vocation if there is no personal time*

5) Work toward making a living wage

6) Stay informed

**political issues on state & federal level; land use planning, noise ordinances, food safety regulations and taxes to name a few*

7) Train the next generation

8) Educate the public

<https://www.growingproduce.com/vegetables/8-ways-to-make-your-farm-more-sustainable>



TREES!



Tree planting season is fast approaching! We will be getting trees ordered from the nurseries by the end of this year for hand plant as well as district planting projects.

So how does the process work?

- Fill out the enclosed handplant order form OR plan a district planting (minimum of 1000 ft) with our District Technician . These order forms need to be turned in to our offices ASAP, but at the latest by 12/31/22

- Our District Technician will order the trees from the nurseries all at once. These trees will not be available until spring for either pick up or planting by the District.

- For handplant orders: there will be a date arranged in spring for everyone to come pick up their trees at our New Salem tree shed office.

201 South 9th St, New Salem.

- For District planting orders: our district technician, Ethan, will arrange with you a date in the spring/early summer for he and the tree crew to come to your planting site to plant the trees. Fall plowing preparation is advised. Tree plantings are all done first, then the crew circles back around to all sites to do the fabric. For reference, all planting and fabric was completed in the 2022 season just after 4th of July for a total planting of just over 101,000 feet!



Save-the-Date

The Second Perennial Cool-Season Invasive Grasses of the Northern Great Plains Workshop



March 15-17, 2023 – North Dakota State University – Fargo, ND

Hosted by NDSU's School of Natural Resource Sciences, Society for Range Management, and the Wildlife Society

Overview:

The workshop is tentatively set for ½ day March 15, the full day March 16, and ½ day March 17, with presentations detailing the current knowledge of perennial cool-season invasive grasses within the northern Great Plains. Presentations will include technical information and practical management ideas to meet objectives when dealing with these species.

The workshop is intended for private enterprises, as well as local, state, and federal agencies that are involved with or concerned over the impacts and management of these species. Anyone can attend and representation is expected to be from North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Iowa, Wyoming, Nebraska, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and adjacent areas.

A call for abstracts will be coming soon.....For more information on the Workshop please contact Shawn DeKeyser at edward.dekeyser@ndsu.edu.

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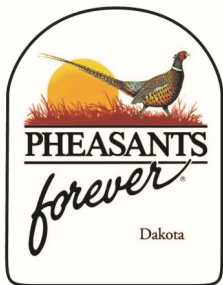
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All Programs and Services of the Soil Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age, or handicap.

Sponsors

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



Upcoming Events

October

3-4th—ND Association of Counties —Event Center
7-8th—ND Lamb and Wool Convention, Medora
10th—Columbus Day, offices closed
10th— Beef & Brews, 416 w Main, Mandan
13th — **SCD Board Meeting**—Mandan
23rd—Halloween Kids Bash at Fort Lincoln
31st—Halloween

November

6th—Daylight Savings time ends
11th—Veterans Day
17th—**SCD Board Meeting**, Mandan
20th-22nd—Annual Convention
24th—Thanksgiving

December

2nd—Pride of Dakota Harvest Showcase, Event Center
14th—Private pesticide training, Farm Credit services
25th—Christmas