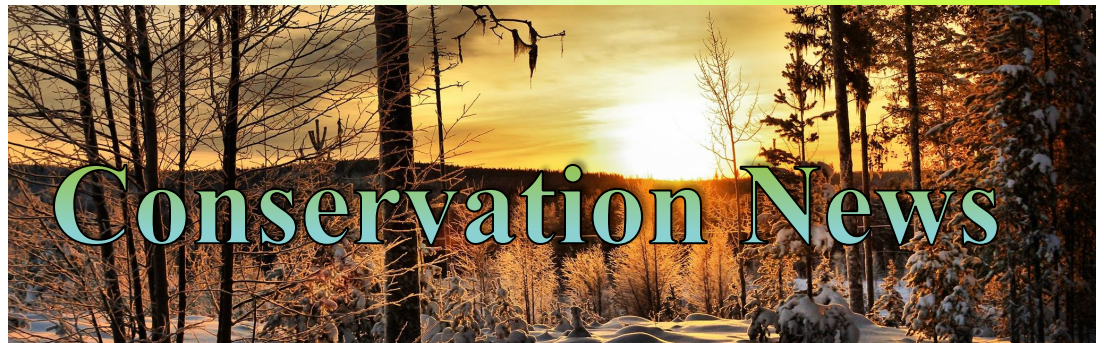




## Morton County Soil Conservation District

Winter/Spring 2023



# Conservation News

## *Congratulations to Spring Valley Cattle, 2022 Leopold Conservation Award winner!*



"The Leopold Conservation Award Program recognizes agricultural landowners actively committed to a land ethic. Sand County Foundation, national sponsor American Farmland Trust and several prominent state conservation partners present the prestigious honor, which consists of \$10,000 and a crystal award, in settings that showcase the landowners' achievements among their peers."  
-<https://sandcountyfoundation.org/our-work/leopold-conservation-award-program>

It was an honor for Morton County Soil Conservation District to nominate the se worthy recipients of this award. Ryan Kobilansky, our previous District Tech and most recent role 319 Watershed Coordinator, wrote the nomination application on behalf of Spring Valley Cattle. Each time a person gets to interact with Lance Gartner and his family, it is a privilege and a person comes away with a new nugget of knowledge.

Spring Valley Cattle is a family operation, that starts with a family story. Like many other farms and ranches in our region. Words like holistic, regenerative, transitioning, on going , ever learning, humbling, and working with nature are part of the language. Also like many operations, their practices began with traditional methods and they found working with nature gives them the best outcome!

Congratulations to Spring Valley Cattle of Glen Ullin. Lance, Anissa, and family many congratulations on this reward culminating years of great work!!

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### SUPERVISORS:

AARON STECKLER  
GEORGE FERDERER  
RICHARD TOKACH  
ROCKY BATEMAN  
STEVE TOMAC  
THOMAS OSTERBAUER

### DISTRICT PERSONN

MALISSA MCKEE  
ETHAN GRESS  
CHANCE PORSBORG

### NRCS PERSONNEL:

JON FETTIG  
LANDON WEISER  
BRYCE ANDERSEN  
JACOB DUMMER  
TIM RENSCHLER  
PAULA KVERNUM  
SHARON POTTS-SAYLER  
WENDY THOMSON  
RYAN FOSTER

STEVE STENSGARD

### FARM BILL SPECIALIST:

BLAKE SOGGE

# 2022 Annual Report

## January -

Election of board of supervisors and update of committees at board meeting  
Landon Weiser began with the district as DC  
First quarter newsletter sent out

## February -

Ryan and Thomas attended and presented at Living Ag Classroom, KFYP hosting  
SCD staff attended Gardening 101 tour, Burleigh SCD hosting, Morton SCD sponsored

## March -

Ryan and Thomas attended Tree promo meeting, Radisson in Bismarck

## April -

Ryan attended and presented at Water Festival, Engage Church in Mandan  
Valerie Frohlich ended her time with the SCD as district secretary  
Second quarter newsletter sent out

## May -

Staff and tree crew began tree planting  
Range Camp sponsorships announced  
SCD donated hand plant trees to Veterans Memorial Cemetery

## June -

Malissa McKee started as SCD secretary  
Tree surplus sale in New Salem  
NACD meeting in Fargo, attended by Rocky

## July -

Staff and tree crew finished tree planting fabric application(s)  
Thomas Osterbauer ended his time with the SCD as district technician  
Ryan trained Malissa and Ethan on water sampling in the Watershed  
Ethan began assisting with water sampling in the Watershed  
Third quarter newsletter sent out

## August -

Mill Levy budget submitted to County Auditor for SCD  
Ryan and Malissa attended Leopold Award banquet and tour in Ellendale, Sand Ranch  
SCD staff attended and assisted with Crops, Covers, and Cows, Burleigh SCD hosted  
Ethan Gress started as SCD district technician transitioned from tree crew internship  
Gardening 101 – Burleigh SCD hosted, Morton SCD sponsored

## September -

Malissa attended SCD social media training  
Malissa attended NDSU extension grant workshop, part 1  
Ethan winterized tree shed in New Salem  
Malissa assisted Landon with NRCS high tunnel site visit(s)  
Ethan attended Grant County SCD windbreak workshop, Flasher  
Ryan Kobilansky ended his time with the SCD as 319 Watershed Coordinator

## October -

Malissa attended NDSU extension grant workshop, part 2  
Malissa received 319 Watershed application training from DEQ staff  
Malissa began attending weekly planning meetings for Farming & Ranching for the Bottom Line  
Fourth quarter newsletter sent out, including tree order form  
Matthew Rebenitsch, Gumbo Flats Ranch, announced as Conservation award winner

## November –

SCD staff and board attended SCD annual convention, Bismarck  
Chance Porsborg started as 319 Watershed coordinator  
Malissa attended Burleigh SCD appreciation dinner  
Malissa and Rocky attended area IV supervisors meeting, Northern Plains Research Lab  
Morton SCD staff and NRCS staff begin planning for NWQI grant for Big Muddy Watershed region assessment

## December -

Malissa began attending planning meetings for Grazing Summit, Burleigh SCD  
Chance attended NDSU extension Soil and Water Conservation Leadership Academy training, Carrington extension  
Malissa attended SCD website training

## 2022 Conservation Practice Implementation: (in acres unless otherwise noted)

Cover Crop ~ 682.6	Crop Rotation ~ 99.1
Residue Management/No Till ~ 1472	Irrigation Water Management ~ 91
Fence ~ 16,788	High Tunnel (per) ~ 1
Livestock Pipelines ~ 18,680	Windbreak Establishment ~
Watering Facilities (tanks) ~ 4	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation ~
Prescribed Grazing ~ 940	
Brush Management ~ 2	
Nutrient Management ~ 1057.1	



# *Life beneath the snow*

source: Audobon.org



Snow affects more than just the way the world looks. It alters the lives of creatures living in and beneath it. Microorganisms grow and hold on to the nitrogen, not just from the snowpack but also the nitrogen that was in the soil before snow started to fall. Winter is a time of great biological activity that produces massive amounts of carbon dioxide.

A cold snap that occurs before a blanket of snow insulates the ground will freeze at least part of the plant and microbial life that has been growing all spring and summer. When plants and other organisms freeze, ice crystals can rupture cells and break down the tissues, which microbes and other scavengers that remain unfrozen can then use as food when they thaw.

To a point, the more severe the freeze, the more dead plants and microorganisms are frozen—and the more ice crystals tear open tissues. As a result, more microbe colonies may thrive when it warms under the snow cover, yielding 25 percent to 200 percent more CO<sub>2</sub> into the air. There is a fine line to this science. If snowfall arrives too late, the ground remains bare and frozen too long, and ice converts into the air.

Think of freezer burn: Leave a piece of fruit in a plastic bag in the freezer too long and ice crystals form inside the bag. Water that was in the fruit has converted, then condensed on the bag, forming ice. The same thing happens in bare soil, only there's no bag to trap the water vapor, which dissipates into the air. The ground grows dry. As a result, though there's plenty of food for microbes, without water their growth is halted.

These microbes, it turns out, provide much of the nitrogen that plants need to grow in the spring. They absorb nitrogen from the snow and from decomposing plants in the soil. As snow melts in the spring and these organisms die, nitrogen is freed at precisely the time plants emerging from winter need it to grow. The microbes provide a critical nitrogen banking service for vegetation in seasonally snow-covered environments.

Thus, the cycle of life is complete and will begin once more come the next snowfall! The earth gives to herself from one stage to the next.





# **MORTON COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## **3rd annual photo contest**

**We invite all photographers to share your photos with us!**

**We will have 4 categorizes that you can enter in:**

**Photos need to be taken in Morton County.**

**\*Soil/Water   \*Plants/Trees   \* Animals**

**\*People working/interacting in nature/conservation efforts**

**A \$50 Visa Card will be given to a winner in each category**



**Only digital files will be accepted  
in JPEG format.**

**Send to: [malissa.mckee@usda.gov](mailto:malissa.mckee@usda.gov)**



**Photo submissions need to  
include:**

**Name, address, phone  
number, category, location of  
photo, and any other  
information about the photo**

**Contest will run from  
January 23st, 2023 to  
March 20th, 2023**

By submitting a photo, you warrant that the photo is an original and was taken by you. Photographer grants permission to Morton County Soil Conservation District to publish winning photo. All photos become property of MCSCD and may be used in our calendar, website, Facebook, newsletter, and other media sources without advance notice.



## Howdy!

319 Watershed coordinator—Chance Porsborg

Howdy everyone, my name is Chance Porsborg and I am the new 319 Watershed coordinator for the Morton County Soil Conservation. Now I may be very new to the Soil Conservation District but some of you may recognize me as I worked right across the hall in the FSA office! Since there may be a few people I have yet to meet, let me take a minute and tell you about myself

I grew up and went to school in Bismarck and graduated from BSC. While I was doing that I was and still am very active at our family's ranch, from barely being able to help Grandpa lift a bale of grain or square bales to now running approximately 100 head of purebred Rambouillet ewes! I am very excited to what the future holds as I plan to continue my endeavors on the ranch for many years to come. With the endless knowledge one gathers throughout life, I can very confidently say that the farm has taught me so much and continues to do so every single day. To which I am extremely grateful.

As we come closer to calving, lambing, seeding, and possibly even some harvesting in the spring. That also brings us closer to more 319 Projects such as, grazing plans, solar wells, fencing, pipelines, etc. I look forward to the new opportunities that this position has to offer and working with you all in the office and on future projects! I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we will see you soon!



## Why Is Site Preparation Important?

District Tech—Ethan Gress

Site preparation is a necessary procedure when it comes to planting just about anything. With tree planting site prep is just as important and will help with the success of the planting. When the Soil Conservation District is discussing with a producer on a possible machine planting, we will suggest that the producer either tills the ground or sprays to kill the sod. This allows the trees to be packed into the ground better while also not having any competition for water or nutrients during the transplant process. The newly planted trees will appreciate the extra work you put in before the planting and you will be happier with the results of your planting.

When tilling, you have a few different ways to go about it. We suggest either tilling strips where you want the rows to be or just tilling a block of ground large enough for all the trees to be planted. When tilling the rows or strips, you do not need to worry about regrowing the grass in between the row. However, if the rows are not where the original plans have approved the rows to be, we will run into some technical issues. When tilling a large block, you will have to replant the grass in between the newly planted rows however this does allow for us to space the rows at exactly 14 feet as our machine can lay down a mark for us to go off.

When spraying, you just need to do enough to kill the sod. You will want to be careful and only use something that will not cause the trees any harm after they are planted. You will also need to be aware of any streams or rivers nearby and take the proper precautions in order to prevent contaminating any freshwater. Spraying can lead to better weed control after the trees are planted as there is no newly exposed soil for the weeds to start growing back. It should be noted that the spray known as "Atrazine" kills weeds and trees by entering through the soil and through the root system. This can lead to trees still dying after being planted due to the chemical still being in the soil. "Round Up" is a direct contact killer of trees which means it will cause issues if the spray contacts leaves, branches, or the bark of the tree. Round Up can be used to spray if you are careful of where you are spraying and mindful of surrounding trees and shrubs. This option is also perhaps a more consistent method of site preparation as you can spray almost anywhere, unlike tilling where due to steep slopes you may not be able to adequately work the ground. We recommend you only spray in strips as it allows for the grass to stay established between the rows just like if you tilled strips.

# Gather Around the Table

A recipe from our district secretary, Malissa McKee

I thoroughly like to cook, be in the kitchen with family and friends, sharing laughter and stories around a good meal. After recently sharing a family recipe in our office for a co worker's 'friends giving' I was encouraged by our District Conservationist, Landon Weiser, to create a section in our newsletters to share recipes! I hope that this new addition is well received by our community.

This quarter, I will share with you the recipe that started it all—my mother's famous party potatoes! For anyone that enjoys mashed potatoes, this will be a sure fire hit.

## Ingredients:

8-10 large potatoes

8 oz Cream cheese

8 oz Onion chip dip

Fresh grated parmesan cheese

Butter—small portion, to taste

Milk—small portion, to desired texture



Enjoy!

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Boil potatoes, with skins on, until soft enough to mash. Melt butter and add small amount of milk into blender along with potatoes. Blend until desired smoothness. Add cream cheese and onion dip. Mix until evenly distributed. If desired, add a portion of parmesan cheese to mixture.

Fold into a 9x13" pan. Sprinkle parmesan across top of mixture. Add tabs of butter across mixture as well.

Bake uncovered for 30 minutes.

## Tree of the quarter ~ EASTERN RED CEDAR

(Juniperus virginiana)

This small to medium evergreen has a short trunk with an irregular, pyramid shaped cone top and is native to the eastern United States. It does well in moist, deep loam, to sand soil conditions and will tolerate alkaline to saline. It is cold hardy, and drought tolerant. The small to medium evergreen is commonly used in farmstead and field windbreaks. The fruit matures in one season, making it beneficial for wildlife feedings. This evergreen grows to maximum crown height of 30-45 feet with a crown width of 15-30 feet. The species does turn a brownish red in winter months.





**From our partners in the Morton County FSA office**



# We're Hiring!

## Farm Service Agency

The North Dakota Farm Service Agency is **hiring** a Permanent Program Technician Position in Mandan, ND - Morton County

Extra **\*\*HIRING INCENTIVES\*\*** may include:

- 15% Recruitment Incentive
- OR
- \$5,000.00 Student Loan Repayment

**\*MUST APPLY BY: 1-17-23**

*The Position Offers:*

- \*Paid vacation
- \*On the job training
- \*Competitive salary
- \*Awesome health/various benefits

For more information on the position,  
Contact: Hannah Bailey  
Phone: 701-667-1163  
Email: [hannah.bailey@usda.gov](mailto:hannah.bailey@usda.gov)

To **apply** for the position:  
<https://www.usajobs.gov/job/695575400>



*The future is bright with FSA!*

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.**

Morton County Soil Conservation District  
2540 Overlook Lane  
Mandan, ND 58554-1593  
  
www.mcsd.com  
Phone: 701-667-1163 ext. 3

***RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED***

**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. POSTAGE**  
**PAID**  
**BISMARCK, ND**  
**Permit No. 433**

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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 disability.*

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## Sponsors

**The Morton County Soil Conservation**

**District would like to thank the following sponsors:**

Agassiz Seed & Supply—Mandan, ND  
Flasher Community Credit Union—Flasher, ND  
Gartner Seed Farm—Mandan, ND  
Western Cooperative Credit Union—Hebron, ND  
Farm Credit Services of Mandan  
Chesak Seed House—Bismarck, ND  
K2S Engineering Inc.—Ypsilanti, ND  
PJ's Farm Supply — Flasher, ND  
Opp Well Drilling & Supplies, Inc. — Glen Ullin, ND  
Rud's Mobil — New Salem, ND  
Duppong's Inc. — Glen Ullin, ND

## Upcoming Events

### January

2 - New Years Day observed, office closed  
5- Morton County SCD board meeting  
8/15/22/29- Annie's Project, Louse Creek Club House, Flasher  
16 - Martin Luther King Jr Day, office closed  
24—Morton Co Producer Day, Mandan Rural Fire Dept

### February

7 - Private Fumigation & Pesticide Training, New Salem  
20 - Presidents Day, office closed

### March

1-Grazing Summit, BSC  
2-Farming and Ranching from the Bottom Line, BSC

