

Annual Conservation Poster Contest



The MCSCD Annual Conservation Poster Contest was held in October 2013. Several Beulah and Hazen classes participated and winners were chosen from each class.

Beulah Elementary 1st Grade- 1st place– Laisha Martens, 2nd place– Blaine Peters, 3rd place – Ava Gillig. **Beulah Middle 6th Grade–** 1st place– Clay Olson, 2nd place– Emily Wenning, 3rd place– MaTaya Dostal. **Hazen Elementary 2nd Grade–** Mrs. Oyen’s class– 1st place– Caleb Davis, 2nd place– Shane Bosch, 3rd place– Bohden Obenauer; Mrs. Schwab’s class– 1st place– Hannah Helde, 2nd place– Isaak Foster, 3rd place– Ethan Richter; Mrs. Vernon’s class– 1st place – Abigail Hintz, 2nd place– Anna Roth, 3rd place– Reed Beyer.

Surplus hand plant trees will be sold the end of May. Keep a look out in the Beulah Beacon and Hazen Star for the exact time and date.



Weed Barrier Management



Tree fabric is a great way to manage weeds while establishing trees! It is low maintenance and assists greatly with tree establishment and growth. However, low maintenance does not mean no maintenance. Tree fabric breaks down very slowly in our arid climate.

We recommend inspecting your fabric once a year after snowmelt and before tree growth. Every 5 years you should create relief cuts with a box cutter on two or four sides of the tree trunk as needed. Care should be taken so as not to damage the tree. If the tree becomes girdled by the fabric (or other tree roots) and doesn't have room to grow the tree will suffer limited growth and may die altogether. A tree that becomes stressed due to girdling can grow around the fabric edge. This creates instability/weakness in the trunk and can result in premature death from winds and imbalanced weight.

If you have had trees planted with fabric five or more years ago and haven't taken a look, it may be a good time to check them this year and cut slits as needed.

If you have questions or concerns please contact the Mercer County SCD.



ATTENTION!

With field season here, the Beulah NRCS and SCD Field Office would like to send out a friendly reminder for all producers to call North Dakota One-Call **BEFORE** you dig. North Dakota Century Code 49-23 requires anyone who engages in any type of excavation to call and notify North Dakota One-Call center and provide an excavation or location notice at least forty-eight hours before beginning any excavation. NRCS and Watershed practices that fall under the excavation definition include ponds, wells, pipelines, tanks, and fences. Cost share payments **will not** be processed without this number. If you do not call before you dig, it is a violation of the law and it endangers everyone.

North Dakota One-Call can be reached at **1-800-795-0555 or 811**

FOREST RESTORATION INITIATIVE LAUNCHED FOR LANDOWNERS

Bottineau - The NDSU-North Dakota Forest Service is launching a new Forest Restoration Initiative to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners who were impacted by flooding or forest health issues. Although natural forests in the floodplains have evolved with periodic flooding, the prolonged 2011 flood killed or severely stressed many tree species. This Forest Restoration Initiative (FRI) was established through a successful 2013-2015 biennial budget request through the State Board of Higher Education and the 2013 Legislature.

Landowners in the Missouri and Mouse River basins, frequently flooded areas, and native upland forests in the headwaters of flood-prone watersheds are considered high priority for receiving financial assistance through the FRI cost-share program. Landowners may be eligible for up to \$15,000 for approved forest restoration activities, such as tree and shrub planting and the removal of dead vegetation. Tree removal in windbreaks is not eligible unless the trees are replanted.

Regardless of whether or not a project is approved for financial assistance, any landowner is eligible for forestry assistance from ND Forest Service staff. Technical assistance from the ND Forest Service is no-cost, no-obligation and landowners can receive a plan for their forestland free of charge. Technical advice on forestland can be given to landowners through face-to-face interaction, telephone and email correspondence.

Almost one-fifth of North Dakota's forests occur within 200 feet of a water way or water body, and these unique forests help protect water resources by reducing flooding and flood damage, filtering contaminants and reducing sediment. These riparian forests also provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife, and numerous outdoor recreation opportunities.

Landowners are encouraged to contact the Forest Restoration Specialist at the Towner State Nursery at derek.lowstuter@ndsu.edu or call (701) 537-5700.



Food Plots for Wildlife: By Justin Edwards



Food and cover are two very important factors to take into consideration when assessing wildlife habitat. In areas lacking agricultural lands, food plots can be very beneficial to wildlife species such as white-tailed deer and pheasants. Food plots provide an important food source and protection from the elements throughout the year.

Several things should be taken into consideration when designing food plots. First, food plots should be a minimum of ½ acre and a maximum of 5 acres. If planted too small, the wildlife can consume all of the available forage before fall and winter when it is needed most. Food plots should be planted within a ¼ mile of winter cover to limit the time wildlife will be exposed traveling to the food source. Try to plant the food plots in odd areas or along edges of habitat. The existing habitat should be fragmented as little as possible.

There are a wide array of plants that can be planted for food plots that benefit several different species of wildlife. Generally, food plots are planted with annual crops such as corn, sunflowers, sorghum, oats, and wheat. For pheasants and deer, it is best to plant multiple species that will provide food for winter and be able to withstand the wind and snow. To benefit wildlife the most, especially pheasants, I would suggest finding a mix that has several types of sorghum, millet, corn, and sunflowers. A mix like this will hold up to the pressure of the winter and provide an excellent food source.

If you have any questions regarding food plots or any type of wildlife habitat feel free to contact me at any time.

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Summer Camp Sponsorships Available



The Mercer County Soil Conservation District will sponsor students to attend conservation camps this summer. The following camps are available for sponsorship:

ND Youth Range Camp: June 2014 at the Logging Camp Ranch, located south of Medora, open to youth ages 13-18 with an interest in natural resources, range judging and having fun. A major focus of the camp is to teach youth the importance of range management through range judging.

North Dakota Wildlife Federation Youth Conservation Camp: August 3-9 at the Camp of the Cross, located on Lake Sakakawea near Garrison, for youth ages 12-15. The camp offers a unique opportunity to learn science, conservation and outdoor skills through hands on activities.

Please call or stop by the Beulah Field Office for more information about these camps and sponsorship.

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.



The Mercer County Soil Conservation District wants to remind you that each of us has a connection to natural resources. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has proclaimed April 27 – May 4, as Stewardship Week, marking the 59th year of the national event. The 2014 Stewardship Week is themed “Dig Deeper: Mysteries of the Soil.”

The Dust Bowl of the 1930’s showed our nation the importance of conservation practices. Farmers and ranchers who have experienced recent droughts know that conservation practices are critical in helping their soil endure, even in the most challenging weather events. Your local conservation district is working with local landowners to assist in a variety of projects and outreach to improve soil health both now and in the long-term. Materials to aid in the observance of Soil and Water Stewardship Week are available free of charge. Please call or stop in the office.

We would like to thank the following Mercer County businesses for their sponsorship of our 2013 annual report which was published in the Dollar Saver: First Security Bank-West, Neuberger Oil Co., Napa Auto Parts, West River Telephone, The Union Bank, Mel Roth Oil & Roughrider Electric.



What's in your Cowpie?

Submitted By Carlee Elke, NRCS Soil Conservationist

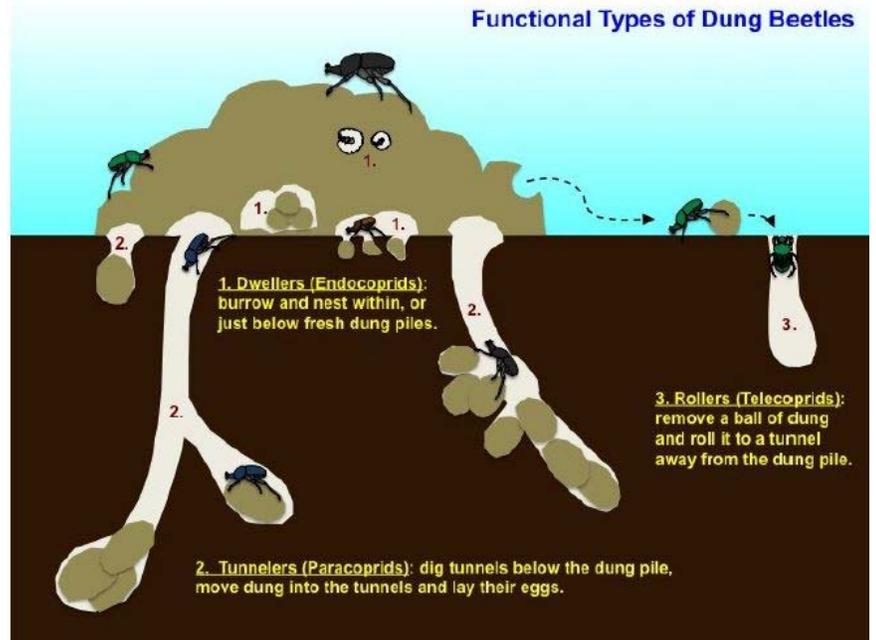
Dung beetles feed on manure and use it to house and feed their offspring; in the process, they improve nutrient recycling, soil structure, and forage growth. The American Institute of Biological Sciences reports that dung beetles save the U.S. cattle industry an estimated \$380 million annually every year through manure recycling. There are 7,000 different species of dung beetles in the world. In the United States, there are less than 100 species of dung beetles and in North Dakota there are only a couple species.

There are three different types of dung beetles that play a role in manure recycling: rollers, tunnelers, and dwellers. Rollers typically work in male-female pairs to roll a ball of dung, which is called a "brood ball," away from the cowpie to bury it. Tunnelers work to bury brood balls either under the cowpie or along the edge and will make holes in your cow pies. Dwellers use the manure as their home.

You may ask yourself, "Why is the dung beetle so important?" Here are a few reasons why:

- *They increase the degradation of manure, which reduces the areas of pasture that would otherwise be covered
- *They incorporate manure back into the soil
- *Increases nitrogen recycling
- *Reduces volatilization of nitrogen into the air
- *The tunnels increase the water holding capacity of the soil, which prevents runoff and increases the water available to the grass plants
- *They cause cow patties to dry out more rapidly
- *Reduces proliferation of parasites that utilize manure as their habitat
- *Reduces the suitability as a breeding site for horn and face flies

You can increase the population of dung beetles by reducing the usage of insecticides used for fly and parasite control, treating animals with insecticide during the cooler months when dung beetles are dormant, or by implementing an intensive rotational grazing system.



From left to right: Rollers, Tunnelers, and Dweller dung beetles.

Project TREES



The Regional Environmental Education Series or TREES Program is presented by Tom Gibson of Bottineau, ND. This program offers conservation education to ND kids through Tom's portrayal of fictional characters from years past.



Tom presented several programs to the Beulah and Hazen stu-

It's Tree Planting Time!



It's that time of the year again, time to start ground preparation for spring 2014 tree plantings. We will be staking tree sites the end of April.



- * Ground must be worked to a depth of six to eight inches and be free of large rocks and clods of sod.
- * The site should be free of grass and weeds.
- * The tree site should be kept clean once planted, weed barrier will be applied one month later.

Proper preparation on tree planting sites is the responsibility of the landowner/operator. The District reserves the right to refuse service if sites are not properly prepared. You will receive a call a few days before we plant your trees. If you have questions, please contact the District office.

The tree planting schedule for 2015 is already filling up. If you are interested in planting trees next year, give us a call or stop in before October. We have several cost share opportunities available, please contact the office to see if you qualify.

Spring Creek Watershed and NWQI

The Spring Creek Watershed is now taking applications for conservation practices. Within the Spring Creek Watershed, we are looking to improve water quality and riparian areas. If you are grazing near the creek or watering in the creek, we can help you improve your operation with fresh water. The watershed project offers 60% cost share on most practices. Please stop in or call if you have any questions. There is no deadline to sign up!

NWQI- If you operate along Goodman Creek in the Spring Creek Watershed, we have another program to benefit you. National Water Quality Initiative, NWQI, offers a higher cost share rate than general EQIP. Please stop in and let us know how we can help you. Next deadline is May 16.

