

**FOSTER
COUNTY SOIL
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

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*"Fostering" Our Natural
Resources*

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Fall 2012



FOSTER COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Conservation
Communicator**

**New District Watershed Coordinator
Katie Gussiaas**

Hello! My name is Katie Gussiaas and I am the new Watershed Coordinator for the Foster County SCD. My husband Jon and I are in the process of moving to Carrington, and until we move completely I'll be in the office most Wednesdays and Thursdays until the end of January when I'll be here full-time. I'm originally from New York Mills, MN but married a Gussiaas from Carrington and that's the reason I have such a familiar last name. As a child I spent a lot of time enjoying the great outdoors, which is why I chose a profession that allowed me to spend a good portion of my time away from a



desk. I graduated from NDSU with a B.S. degree in Natural Resources Management, spent a summer as a park ranger at Lake Metigoshe State Park and then spent a year in Minot at the conservation district there as the district manager. Now we are moving to Carrington to be closer to family and friends. In my spare time I love to cook and bake, read, spend time outdoors, hunt and fish, play cards, and I'm always interested in learning new things.

My role here at the SCD is to help producers and homeowners reduce their impacts on the local watersheds, specifically the Kelly Creek watershed. The primary goal of this project is to improve water quality in Kelly Creek and its major tributaries through decreases in cropland nutrient and animal waste runoff. To do this, I'll help producers decide which best management practices (BMPs) are the best fit for their cropland and rangeland, how to improve the handling of animal waste, and do educational outreach into the community. I am actively looking for people to be a part of this project, so if you have ideas of how you would like to improve your operation or know you want to do something but you're just not sure what, then please get in touch with me! If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or would like to be a part of the project, please feel free to contact the district office at 652-2551 ext.3 or send me an email at katie.gussiaas@nd.nacdnet.net and I will get back to you as soon as I possibly can. I am looking forward to getting to know the wonderful people of Foster County!



**Foster County SCD
2012 Supervisors, Advisors and Staff**

Chairman Curtiss Klein	701-653-5708
Vice Chair Robert House	674-3606
Supervisor James Fandrich	652-3485
Supervisor Karl Hoppe	652-2951
Supervisor Mike Sabinash	435-2958
NRCS District Conservationist Donald Olds	652-2551 Ext 101
SCD Manager Dionn Schaaf	Ext 102
Watershed Coord. Katie Gussiaas	Ext 114
Soil Con. Tech. Nichole Johnson	Ext 112
Ed. Coordinator Jill Vigessaa	701-799-5488
Foster County Extension Agent Joel Lemer	652-2581

Till it to me Straight....

- Foster County Soil Conservation District Board meetings are tentatively scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 9; 9:30 am on Tuesday, Nov. 13; and 9:30 am on Monday, Dec. 3. Please contact the district office at 652-2551 to confirm dates and times.
- USDA Service Center will be closed for Columbus Day on Monday, Oct. 8; Veterans Day on Monday, Nov. 12; Thanksgiving Day on Thursday, Nov. 22; and for Christmas Day on Tuesday, Dec. 25.
- Deadline for applications for the North Dakota Forest Service Tree Conservation Assistance Program is **October 22**.
- Deadline for EQIP applications is **November 16**.

Range Tour at Spickler Ranch

On September 13, in cooperation with Eddy County SCD and the Foster and Eddy County Extension Offices, Foster County SCD helped sponsor a range tour hosted by the Spickler Ranch. Spickler Ranch, operated by brothers Justin and Nathan Spickler and their wives Sara and Emily, received Foster County SCD's Conservation Achievement Award in 2009. Nathan and Justin Spickler were named Ranchers of the Year for 2011 by the North Dakota Stockmen's Association. During the tour, the Spicklers showcased several practices and improvements they've implemented over the last several years. They discussed the advantages and the lessons they've learned with the implementation of these practices and improvements. Some of the practices they discussed included the use of cover crops for forage production and grazing, grazing system options, variable water systems, fencing options, and feedlot improvements. Many of these practices were tried and adopted with technical and financial assistance through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) administered through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The tour was attended by 25 people. A meal was provided afterward.



Eco Ed Day

On September 11, Foster County SCD held the annual Eco Ed Day tour at Juanita Lake Park for sixth graders from the Carrington and Midkota Schools. Sixty students spent a windy but otherwise beautiful day attending six outdoor learning sessions. Foster County SCD Supervisors Curtiss Klein and Bob House, Foster County Extension Agent Joel Lemer, and SCD Watershed Coordinator Katie Gussiaas taught the agronomy session, including helping the kids make seed bottles. Jim Collins from ND Dept. of Health used a model to show the kids how watersheds work and talk about water quality. Don Olds, NRCS District Conservationist for Foster County, worked with the students on rangelands and range plants. Louis Moran, an NRCS soil scientist, led the sessions on soils and erosion, with the assistance of Nichole Johnson, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician for Foster County. Clint Perkins and Damon Haan from Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge talked to the students about wetlands and wildlife, while Gerri Makay from ND Forest Service helped them learn about trees.



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Fall Herbicide Application

Those who would like to arrange for the district to apply Casoron this fall should contact the district office. Casoron is a granular herbicide that suppresses weeds in the spring before the trees come out of dormancy. Application will probably take place in late October or early November, so you will want to be added to the list before then. For assistance, contact Dionn at the Foster County Soil Conservation District at 652-2551.

Tree Orders for Spring

A list of conservation grade trees that should be available for 2013 plantings is included with this newsletter. Please contact us as soon as possible, and we will be glad to help you plan your tree plantings. While we can order trees at any time, the nurseries have limited supplies, and we suggest ordering by November. The sooner we get your order in to the nursery, the more likely you are to be able to get the kinds of trees that you want.

Keep in mind that preparation of planting sites should begin this fall. In most cases the ground should be worked at least once in the fall and again in the spring. We cannot plant trees if the site is not properly prepared. Beginning planning this fall before the snow starts to accumulate will help us to get the site measured and the soils checked for suitability. Different tree species are adapted to different soil types.

Also, if you haven't checked your existing tree rows yet, do it soon, before the leaves fall, to get a count of trees that need replacing. The district can also order apple trees, but fruit trees are especially likely to run out early, so bring your requests to us as soon as possible.

For assistance with tree orders and tree plans, please contact Dionn at the Foster County Soil Conservation District at 652-2551.



EQIP Deadline is
November 16



Cover Crops and Drought

An article was posted by the No-Till Farmer (www.no-tillfarmer.com) in August that many may find interesting. It suggested using cover crops to help conserve water during drought by covering the soil. However, according to Kris Nichols from the USDA's Agriculture Research Service in Mandan, ND, cover crops also do better than crop residue at supporting soil organisms that help soil retain water and help plants gain nutrients. The article reminds us of the importance of plant diversity, and suggests that many cover crops' seeds require little moisture to germinate if planted properly.

Shared District Conservationist in Foster and Eddy Counties

The position of District Conservationist for both Foster County and Eddy County is being filled by one person beginning this fall. Donald Olds has been DC for Foster County for the last ten years, and was a soil conservationist in Eddy County for five years. He plans to follow a regular schedule of being in the Eddy County office on Mondays and Tuesdays, and in the afternoon on Fridays. He will be in the Foster County office on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and in the morning on Fridays. He plans to follow this schedule unless events or meetings scheduled in either county require his presence. He can be contacted in the Foster County office at 652-2551, and the phone number of the Eddy County office is 947-2436.

Assistance Programs from State Forest Service

The North Dakota Forest Service is offering a program called the Tree Conservation Assistance Program (TCAP). This program is available to rural landowners who can't get funding through other programs to help plant trees, including new windbreaks, living snow fence, wildlife trees, windbreak renovations, and riparian plantings. It provides a maximum of \$1500 for up to 75% of the total cost, and can include costs such as weed barrier fabric and tree tubes as well as the planting itself. Applications are due **October 22, 2012**, and must include a tree planting plan, so please stop into our office soon if you are interested. The TCAP may also be part of a Firewise Program plan to reduce your home's vulnerability to wildfire. For information, please contact the SCD office at 652-2551.

Why Plant Trees?

Why plant trees? Because they can

- Prevent erosion from wind and water
- Slow water runoff, assisting with groundwater recharge
- Control snow distribution
- Screen airborne particles and dust
- Provide shade
- Provide wind protection that increases productivity of downwind crops
- Provide wind protection to conserve energy and/or protect livestock
- Provide habitat for crop pollinators and predators of crop pests
- Provide a visual screen
- Provide wildlife habitat and beautification
- Provide fruit and berries
- Sequester carbon and provide oxygen

