

# FOSTER COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

6720 Highway 200  
Carrington, ND 58421

Phone: 701-652-2551 ext. 3

Fax: 855-888-6970

E-mail:

dionn.schaaf@nd.nacdnet.net

www.fosterscd.org

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*"Fostering" Our Natural Resources*



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[www.ag.ndsu.edu/trees/handbook.htm](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/trees/handbook.htm)

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Spring 2016



FOSTER COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# Conservation Communicator

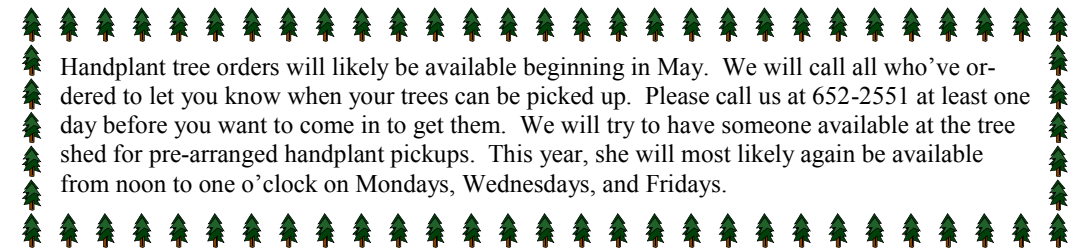
## Why We're Here!

Soil conservation is the prevention of soil loss from erosion. I am sure I did not surprise anyone with that definition but wanted to remind everyone what our ultimate goal is here at the district. We are best known for our tree plantings but do offer many other services for urban or rural folks alike to help inhibit all forms of erosion.

Up until the last 18 months many of us younger producers believed the main threat to our soil was thru the excessive moisture that would strip our expensive nutrients and carry our best soil into the ever expanding sloughs. Mother nature, as she usually does, has found a way to humble those beliefs by not only limiting our moisture but by blowing enough soil particles into the air it looked like it did when those sheets of rain were coming down. Hopefully this has reminded all producers the importance of soil health and residue management. Many times this is accomplished thru minimum or no-till but being realistic we understand this is not always possible or acceptable for some. Thankfully for those, advancements in vertical tillage products, use of cover crops, and other practices we have offered cost share for have helped limit the references to the 'dirty thirties'. Whatever "till" practice you choose please try to do your part to help conserve as much of the land as you can. I know I would like to be part of a generation in history, which is remembered for learning from the mistakes made by those who came before us.

Check out our website for a list of our products and services offered. We may be able to assist you in additional ways as well so please let us know if there is a conservation issue or practice that you feel we could help address that we are not already providing.

Cody Montgomery  
SCD Supervisor



Handplant tree orders will likely be available beginning in May. We will call all who've ordered to let you know when your trees can be picked up. Please call us at 652-2551 at least one day before you want to come in to get them. We will try to have someone available at the tree shed for pre-arranged handplant pickups. This year, she will most likely again be available from noon to one o'clock on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.



The District has purchased several copies of a book by geologist David R. Montgomery. **Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations** is available at Carrington Library or it can be checked out from the SCD office. Members of the Board will also have copies available to borrow.



Foster County SCD 2015 Supervisors, Advisors and Staff	
Chairman Curtiss Klein	701-653-5708
Vice Chair Robert House	674-3606
Supervisor Cody Montgomery	652-5397
Supervisor Karl Hoppe	650-8810
Supervisor Marie Pozarnsky	652-1169
NRCS District Conservationist Paul DuBourt	652-2551 Ext 120
Soil Con. Tech. Nichole Johnson	Ext 121
SCD Manager Dionn Schaaf	Ext 123
SCD Ed. Coordinator Jill Vigesaa	701-799-5488
Foster County Extension Agent Joel Lemer	652-2581

### Till it to me Straight...

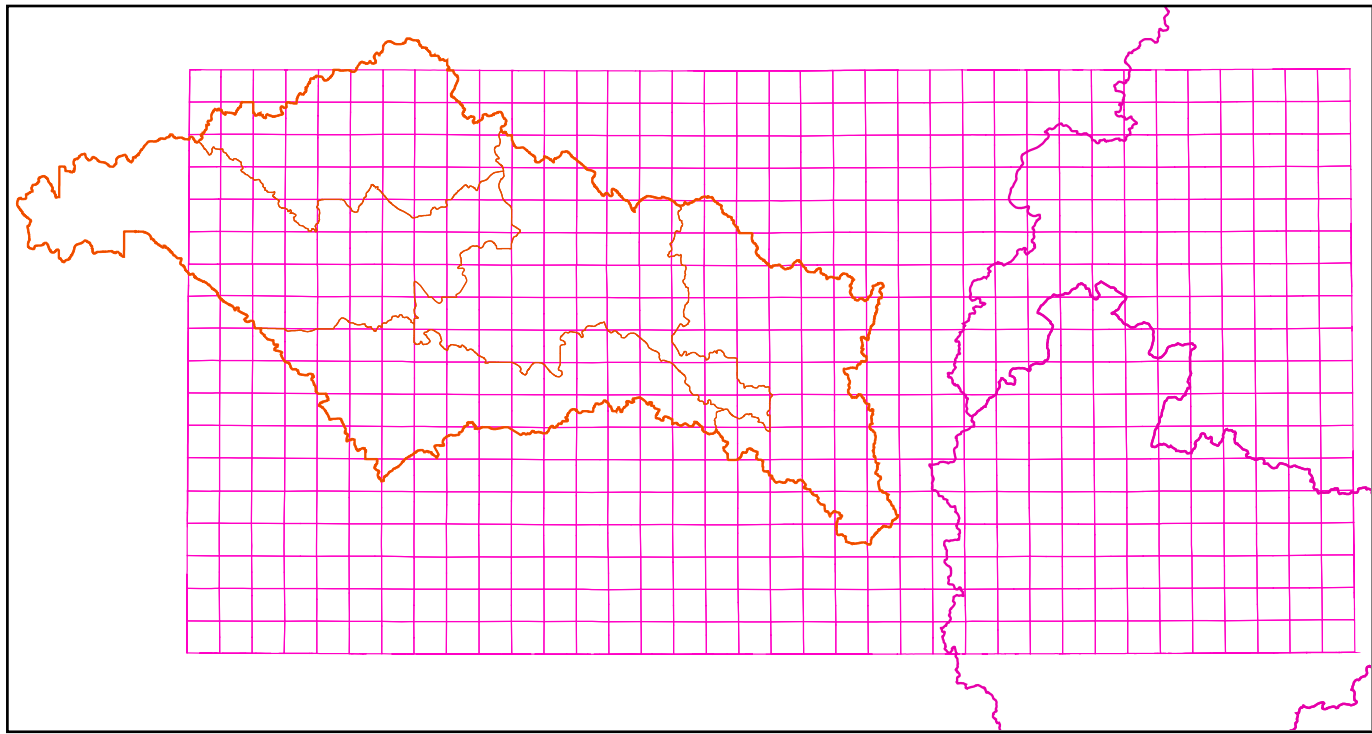
- Foster County Soil Conservation District Board meetings are tentatively scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on May 9, June 13, and July 11 (2nd Mondays). Please contact the district office at 652-2551 to confirm dates and times.
- USDA Service Center will be closed for Memorial Day on Monday, May 30 and for Independence Day on Monday, July 4.
- "Talking Dirt" on KDAK (1600 AM) will be at 8:40 am on May 4, June 1, and July 6 (first Wednesdays).
- Applications for 2017 tree plantings through the NDASCD Outdoor Heritage Fund Tree Planting Initiative are due July 15.
- Soil and Water Stewardship Week is April 24 through May 1.

## Baldhill Creek Watershed Project Includes Eastern Foster

This is the last season for the Kelly Creek Watershed Project, which includes much of northwestern Foster County and Scott's Slough in Wells County. However, a new watershed project has begun that includes the areas in eastern Foster County that drain into the Baldhill Creek. The map below shows the Kelly Creek Watershed Project area west of the James River and the Baldhill Creek Watershed Project area east of the James River, overlaid on a section map of Foster County. Townships within the Baldhill Creek Watershed Project area include all of McHenry, Glenfield, Eastman, and McKinnon; most of Rolling Prairie; much of Florance (east of Lake Juanita); and areas along the eastern edge of Bucephalia and Haven.

As with the Kelly Creek Project, the Baldhill Creek Watershed Project will assist with application of best management practices that improve water quality along with the producers operation. The district's website ([fosterscd.org](http://fosterscd.org)) has a page for the Kelly Creek project that offers information on eligible practices, and the Baldhill Creek project will offer similar assistance.

The Baldhill Creek Watershed Project is being administered by the Griggs County Soil Conservation District in Cooperstown. Their office can be contacted at 797-2240. For questions on the Kelly Creek Watershed Project, please contact Foster County SCD at 652-2551 ext. 3.



## Soil Erosion is an Ongoing Problem

The Texas panhandle saw a dust storm 100 miles wide and 2,000 feet high consisting of dirt picked up in Kansas and Colorado. Back in the Dirty Thirties? No, it happened on Tuesday, April 5, 2016. Increasing numbers of dust storms have been seen in the US for several years now, evidence that we are losing topsoil at a rate we had hoped not to see again.

It's happening here too. This photo shows some of the black snow in the ditches along Highway 200 back in March of this year, and I'm sure you could find the same sight elsewhere during any trip through the state. It has been pointed out that this is just the tip of what's blowing away. As the topsoil disappears, the productivity of the land blows away too. The American prairies have already lost many inches of topsoil, and this is a resource that takes 500 to 1,000 years to form a new inch of soil.

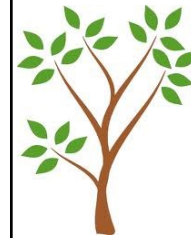
To be good stewards of the land, we have to consider the effects of our practices on future generations. As tillage allows soil to blow, no-till is a great beginning. But it's becoming clear that it's only a start, slowing the loss. To protect and improve the soil, consider practices like cover crops that will promote soil health and provide protection from the wind and runoff.



## Tree Planting Prep and Care

Ground preparation is very important for tree planting. We cannot plant trees if the site is not properly prepared. Plantings in existing fields usually don't require much prep, as long as the weeds have been kept out. If your planting will be getting weed barrier fabric, it should be worked and weeded for a minimum of 4 feet on either side of the tree row, but 5 feet is better. The ground should be worked until the soil is not clumpy, because this can lead to air pockets around the roots, but not to the point that it is fluffy or powdery.

New plantings are impacted more by conditions than more established trees, so they need more care. A recommendation from NRCS is that newly planted seedlings that aren't receiving sufficient rainfall should receive 5 gallons of water per week during the first growing season, and 10 gallons every other week for the following 2 years, and should be watered at least every 10 days if it hasn't rained.



It's also important to try to minimize competition from weeds. There are several options for doing this. If you want to stick with tillage, you'll need to do it regularly and keep in mind that you should go no more than 1 to 3 inches deep, and no closer than 2 feet from the seedlings, or you'll be damaging the roots. Within 2 feet of the trees you'll need to use hand tools or pull the weeds.

## Manure Spreader Available

The District's manure spreader is available for lease again. It has vertical beaters that give a wide, even spread and a capacity of approximately 420 bushels. The district has shafts to fit either 1 3/8" or 1 3/4" PTOs. A tractor of at least 120 hp with a 1000 rpm PTO is required to operate it, as well as a power washer for cleaning it.

The manure spreader is available for \$300 per day. This cost includes manure testing and soil testing on one field if the leasee desires and arranges for it in time to receive the results. There is a \$500 repair and cleanup deposit, which will be applied to the rental cost if the machine is returned properly cleaned and in good repair. For more information, contact the SCD office at 652-2551 ext. 3.

## 2016 Stewardship Week April 24– May 1

The theme for the 2016 Stewardship Week is "We All Need Trees." It will highlight the many benefits and services provided to us all by trees. Besides the obvious advantages of shade, wood products, and fruit, they also help to build and maintain healthy soil, and provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat, fuel, and jobs. We often don't realize how they provide benefits and products that we use every day. This year the district will again be providing Stewardship Week materials as requested to local schools and churches.



## Two Tree Planting Grant Applications Available

Applications are now available for the *North Dakota Conservation District Outdoor Heritage Fund Tree Planting Initiative*. There is a link to the form on the district website ([www.fosterscd.org](http://www.fosterscd.org)), or you can pick one up in our office. The program provides a 60% match on costs for tree planting, weed barrier fabric, and tree tubes if needed, up to a maximum of \$25,000.00. The minimum request for this program is \$1800.00, so small plantings may not qualify. Shelterbelt purposes can include erosion prevention, water quality, farmstead planting, and wildlife. The application deadline for plantings in spring of 2017 is July 15, 2016. As always, the application must include a plan that meets NRCS specifications, so please give us time for planning and to check your soils if necessary before the deadline.

The *ND Forest Service Shelterbelt Renovation Program* is still available. The process for that program begins by doing the online pre-application windbreak renovation questionnaire on the ND Forest Service website, and the next pool for these has a deadline of August 15. The Forest Service will review the questionnaire, and if it appears to be eligible will do an onsite assessment and renovation plan. You can find a link to the program on the Forest Service website ([www.ag.ndsu.edu/ndfs](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ndfs)), or there is also a link on the SCD's home page. Again, if you need any assistance with this, feel free to contact our office.

## Project TREES Visits Carrington Grade School

On March 15, Tom Gibson from The Regional Environmental Education Series (Project TREES) was in Carrington to give presentations at the grade school. The first graders learned about the water cycle from rancher "Pete Bogg" while the second grade learned about how early settlers struggled to get adequate water from immigrant "Gunnar." "Sam Ting" taught the third grade about water pollution. The fourth grade met a traveler with Lewis and Clark. The fifth grade met game show host "Darin Ewe" and played his conservation quiz show for "conservation dollars and common cents." Project TREES is a statewide program that was developed by Foster County SCD and is managed through the district. Tom Gibson has been the presenter for the program for 25 years. The variety of programs he offers allow students to see different programs each year.

## Spring field crew needed!

Machine and hand planting trees, and application of weed barrier fabric and tree tubes. Hours vary, often based on weather. Work usually occurs mainly in May and June. If interested, please call 652-2551 ext. 3.

