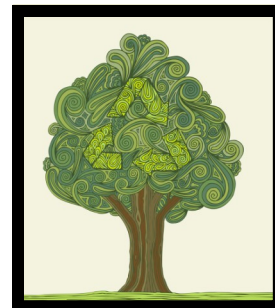


NDASCD

N.D. Association of Soil Conservation Districts

CONSERVATION NEWS

To advance the interests of North Dakota Soil Conservation Districts



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PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

By LeAnn Harner



Despite the rain and late snow showers - it's spring. We've had an exciting beginning to our year, weathering a couple of near government shutdowns, questions about the Federal budget and closure of the RC&D program - not to mention plenty of local resource concerns with blizzards and flooding.

The ND Legislature was very generous with SCDs, agreeing with SBARE's recommendation to add \$150,000 to the district assistance program. Those funds, coupled with another grant from the Forest Service (not yet confirmed), translates to nearly the same amount of funding as the requests received by the State Committee from SCDs. The Legislature also funded the Soil Health/Salinity Initiative, so by early fall, we should be seeing those specialists at our meetings, tours, etc.

Areas I, II, & III have completed their meetings. Prior to the event, NDASCD sent out surveys directly to supervisors and asked them to complete and return before the area meeting. Those suggestions have been compiled and will be attached to area meeting minutes. I hope districts will review these results at their local meetings and maybe implement some of the ideas.

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EXECUTIVE LINE—Tom Hanson

It is the season for tree planting.

This spring season is shaping up to be a great tree planting time. Plenty of moisture, cool conditions, and sunshine should get plantings off to a strong start. Although the season is delayed, it will still be great for establishing windbreaks, shelterbelts, and living snow fences.

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President's Comments continued from page 1

Why are we doing the questionnaires? It's an opportunity to think about changes you might like to see in your SCD - or our state association. You send them into the office, so no one knows who's made what comment. So far, the results have proven to be very worthwhile.

For supervisors in Areas IV & V - please complete your survey. If you can't find your copy, ask NDASCD or your local office. If you forget to send them in, just bring them to the area meeting.

Speaking of area meetings - in Area III, Assistant State Conservationists Terry Gisvold and Andy Wingenbach presented the NRCS report...or their version. They led a discussion that included how they see things working between NRCS and SCDs. It wasn't your typical "report," and gave a perspective on NRCS that you can only get in a live meeting with give and take among the participants. If you like that format, I hope you tell them - and the State Office, whom they were representing. Acting State Conservationist Jack Russell had a mandatory conference on the budget that day, but Terry and Andy did a great job filling in. That's a format that could be implemented at other meetings and conferences.

Our State Conservationist Paul Sweeney has been named Senior Project Leader for the Regional Conservationist to implement advance drainage management strategy for the Mississippi River Basin Initiative. While I miss working directly with Paul, he remains in the Bismarck office, since much of his work will be completed via the phone and video conferencing. This is a new position which could help determine drainage policy not just in the region, but potentially nationwide. Good luck, Paul!

Before a new State Conservationist is selected, Jack Russell and Jennifer Heglund will be Acting State Conservationist...first Jack for two months and then Jenny. It's a great way for them to stretch their leadership skills and should help things flow smoothly in our state. They've assured me that SCDs wishing to pursue contribution agreements, etc. should continue to do so. *Some contribution agreements have been signed, so if you'd like to see them for inspiration, just ask NRCS.*

Last week Senator Conrad held an Ag Advisory meeting

with farm groups. It was great to see how many people mentioned conservation and research as important in the budget and next Farm Bill. There were some thought-provoking comments about our programs, too. *One group suggested that producers be paid for what they're already doing, rather than bribed to adopt conservation practices. Another asked if it was ethical to continue with CRP when we now know how to farm or ranch highly erodible land in an environmentally-responsible manner. What do you think?* This might be something to ponder as you are sitting in the tractor cab this spring.

Take time to enjoy the blessing of the land as it starts its annual growing cycle.

Executive Line continued from page 1

Lincoln-Oakes Nursery is still taking orders so don't feel it is too late to get in later requests from producers. Deliveries are progressing nicely which makes for a hectic time at the Nursery with trucks being loaded continually and crews working overtime to get the trees out. Many deliveries have already been done to out-of-state customers so we will focus on North Dakota deliveries in the next 2 weeks.

Our spring dig (harvest) has been challenging. The very wet weather and later than normal snow melt did not allow the crew to begin lifting as soon as they had hoped, and extensive rain and snow since then has only allowed a few days recently to "catch-up". These spring lifted trees have allowed orders to be filled and get ready for shipment. Freight deliveries have been going out extensively for the past three weeks with more to do. Yes, this is the busy season at Lincoln-Oakes, one which we work all year to provide for.

As SCDs plan summer tours and informational meetings for producers, please send those dates in to this office so we can post them on our website. Several SCDs are doing this and we put them in the newsletter and also on the website. Our intent is to make the website a place where you can receive the most current updates on SCD happenings and also NDASCD activities.

I see where some environmental groups have initiated a lawsuit to enforce air quality standards for ammonia around livestock feeding facilities. As producers face these

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Executive line continued from page 2

issues, please check out the article in this newsletter describing how windbreaks can mitigate odors from livestock production facilities. Trees also provide a visual privacy barrier.

The Legislature passed a couple of pieces of legislation which would seek to streamline the permitting process for tile drainage. This will give more control to the local Water Resource District with assistance from the State Water Commission if they want to utilize their expertise. My guess is that WRDs receiving tile drainage applications will utilize experienced engineers in this process (if they don't already have one) on a regular basis. I urge SCDs to offer their expertise in soils to assist the WRDs in this process as my fear is they will not consider soil chemistry in the permitting process. We have seen some drain projects which fail because some sodicity issues also are present with the saline problems when in conjunction with certain clay type soils. It is estimated this condition would present itself in less than 10% of the soils involved, but that is enough where it should be checked. Putting in drains is a huge expense for a producer and if they don't work properly due to soil chemistry problems, SCDs may be able to help avoid a financial catastrophe. Please consider utilizing the NDSU Soil Department (Larry Cihacek or Dave Hopkins) to determine if a problem could exist if you might have a question. Contractors also can contact these individuals for checking on potential tile drain problems. NDSU Extension publications are currently being developed with assistance from NRCS to address these potential circumstances. Three salinity specialists will be hired in NDSU Extension during the coming summer, but may not be in place to assist with these questions until autumn. If you have questions on this please contact me.

Good luck with the spring planting season! Be safe!



Expenses of Soil Conservation District Supervisors & Staff Scott Hochhalter

Each elective or appointed officer, employee, representative, or agent of this State, or of any of its subdivisions, agencies, bureaus, boards, or commissions, shall be paid an allowance for meals, lodging and mileage while engaged in the discharge of a public duty away from his/her normal working and living residence. The rates are determined by the state legislature and can only be changed by them.

Allowable IN-STATE TRAVEL reimbursement for meals, lodging and mileage are as follows:

Aug. 1, 2011

- First Quarter, 6:00 am to 12 noon, \$5.00 - Breakfast \$6.00
- Second Quarter, 12:00 noon to 6:00 pm, \$7.50 - Lunch \$9.00
- Third Quarter, 6:00 pm to 12:00 midnight, \$12.50 - Dinner -\$15.00
- Fourth quarter, 12:00 midnight to 6:00am, \$63.90 - Lodging, plus any additional applicable state or local taxes on lodging.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish a policy to set the lodging reimbursement at an amount equal to ninety percent of the rate established by the United States General Services Administration for lodging reimbursement in this State.

A Political Subdivision, which includes Soil Conservation Districts, may reimburse an elective or appointed official, employee, representative, or agent for actual lodging expenses.

Personal vehicle mileage reimbursement is 51 cents per mile.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall adopt rules establishing mileage reimbursement for actual and necessary travel in the performance of official duty when the travel is by motor vehicle; the use is required by the employing entity. The Director shall amend the rules when necessary to set reimbursement at the same rate as established by the United States General Services Administration for privately owned vehicles.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY

14 State Envirothon Competition, Crystal Springs

25 DEADLINE FOR ACHIEVEMENT WINNER PROGRAM

JUNE

5-7 NACD Northern Plains Region Leaders Meeting, Hot Springs, SD

15 Area IV Annual Meeting, Garrison City Auditorium
Hosted by West McLean County SCD

16 Area V Annual Meeting, Williston Research Extension Center
Hosted by Williams County SCD

27 NDASCD Board of Directors Meeting, Lincoln-Oakes Nursery

SEPTEMBER

15 Soil Health Tour, Burleigh County SCD

DECEMBER

1 Winter Grazing Tour, Burleigh County SCD

JANUARY 2012

18 Soil Health Workshop, Burleigh County SCD





NACD REPORT NOTES

Richard Faught, NDASCD representative

In this day and age, acronyms are as common as loose hair on an old dog. Now we are subjected to an acronym that has serious consequences for Conservation. CR "Continuing Resolution" has been bandied about like a shuttlecock in a fast badminton game. The latest "CR" is scheduled to end September 30, 2011.

The last minute budget deal for fiscal year 2011 calls for a \$38 billion cut below FY 2010 levels. Agriculture funding will see a \$3 billion reduction including a \$118 million NRCS budget cut. The Conservation Operations account which funds Conservation Technical Assistance dropped \$15 million below FY 2010. Watershed Rehabilitation Program, funded at \$18 million, was cut \$22 million. The Watershed and Flood Prevention Operation account and the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) programs were eliminated. Not only was the RC&D program eliminated but all the current "in progress" programs were abandoned. In effect, the Government turned its back and walked away from them.

Mandatory farm bill conservation programs' funding was also cut. The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) were significantly reduced from the authorized 2008 Farm Bill established funding levels.

The NACD mission is to serve Conservation Districts by providing national leadership and a unified voice for natural resource conservation. To that end NACD is fighting and will continue to fight for full funding for these programs in the 2012 Farm Bill. Obviously, this is going to be an uphill battle. Anyone concerned about natural resource conservation must join in the fight. Work within your local Soil Conservation District to bring forth your ideas.

The NACD is requesting \$227.7 million dollars for the 319 non-point source pollution grants for fiscal year 2012 through the Interior Appropriations Bill. This money will help leverage cost-share funding at the state and local level. The 319 NPS "Non Point Source" program addresses water pollution from various sources that affect water quality, including nutrient runoff from agriculture land, faulty septic systems from residential properties, and storm water runoff. Under this program, EPA awards funding to the states, to be used by state and local governments to address nonpoint source pollution problems.

The 319 program is critically important to streambank stabilization, manure management systems, storm water management, low impact development, and other projects by Conservation Districts to address water quality at the local level. The EPA 319 program is a good program because it works with state and local governments and Conservation Districts to address local issues.

The NACD Northern Plains Region Leaders Meeting will be held at Hot Springs, South Dakota on June 5-7, 2011. Read more information in e-notes at: <http://nacdnet.org/news/publications/enotes/>

Windbreaks: A "fresh" tool to mitigate odors

Taken from "Agroforestry Notes", AF 41- Feb.2011

Windbreaks (shelterbelts, vegetative environmental buffers) placed around livestock production facilities as *Working Trees* can help mitigate the movement of odors and dust generated by these operations. Four primary factors are thought to contribute to these odor issues:

- Urban expansion has placed many more people into closer contact with agricultural operations.
- Large scale livestock confinement production has led to increased concentrations of manure.
- Heavy concentrations of odor emissions travel across highly modified landscapes relatively devoid of natural barriers.
- Market economics and regulatory policies create limited producer incentives to control activities beyond minimum regulatory requirements.

Windbreaks alone will not prevent these odor problems but can provide farmers and ranchers with a "fresh" environmental tool to help reduce negative visual perceptions and the detection of smell by neighbors and surrounding communities.

The potential of windbreaks to mitigate livestock odor arises from the tree/shrub impacts on the fundamental characteristics and physical behavior of the livestock odor plume. These livestock odor plume characteristics are:

- Odor plumes are typically at ground level; often have limited upward movement; are variable; and may be very extensive covering large land areas;
- Odors generated in animal facilities are intense and detectable at appreciable distances; often concentrate and travel on particulates; but odor perception by individuals is highly variable.

For more information on odor windbreak design, mitigation and management, contact NDASCD.