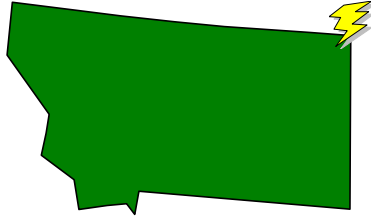


Sheridan County Conservation Notes

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Conservation District

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Sheridan County Conservation District's 2004 Conservation Cooperator of the Year

This year's cooperator of the year award goes to Strand Farms. Jerry and Donna Strand, along with their son Jason and his wife Christine continue to farm the family operation.



(Pictured Above: Jerry, Donna, and Jason Strand)

Jerry and Jason have changed their original farming practices that included a 2/3 wheat and 1/3 summer fallow rotation into a continuous cropping operation. Since 1998, when they purchased a Morris no-till drill and adopted the practice of chemical fallow, Jerry and Jason have been continuous cropping and have incorporated additional alternative

crops into their rotation. The benefits of this and the other conservation efforts they practice include a substantial fuel savings, a reduction in erosion, a decline in disease problems, and fewer weeds.

They first planted Lentils in the late 70's and even had an irrigation pivot in the late 80's. They've grown Safflower, Canola, and Mustard, along with the standard wheat crops of Sheridan County. They have planted grass buffers, tree rows and have been working with the Plentywood NRCS office in an effort to restore a 270 acre wetland through the Wetland Reserve Program.

Congratulations to Jerry and Donna, and Jason and Christine of Strand Farms, Sheridan County's Conservation Cooperators of the Year for 2004

SCCD Response to Your Input

In the last issue of Conservation Notes, we printed your responses to the questionnaire about major natural resource concerns or problems in N.E. Montana. And we promised we would respond. So Here goes;

The most important natural resource area of concern to you is noxious weeds, followed by water quality, water availability, agricultural

sustainability, and agriculture productivity and conservation.

The District continues its policy of providing education and guidance regarding noxious weeds. Although the County Weed District has authority over noxious weed control, the Conservation District cooperates with the Weed District in all efforts in the battle against noxious weeds.

The District began an intensive study of the Big Muddy Creek in the spring of 2004. We have a grant from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to monitor the creek for one more year (2005). (See a complete report at www.bigmuddywatershed.com)

The District also measures, samples, and tests about 100 wells in the County every month. These are primarily in the southeastern part of the County in the Clear Lake Aquifer, but wells and streams elsewhere in the County are also monitored on a regular basis. The District will also assist any resident of the County in any water related issue that should arise, including permit, water quality, and water quantity matters.

You get most of your accurate information about natural resources from the Sheridan County Conservation District, then from the County Extension Service, NRCS, Wheat Growers Association, and FSA.

The District has improved its information services with the addition of two new web sites. You can learn about the District and the projects at <http://sheridan.mt.nacdnet.org/index.html>. The Big Muddy Watershed is a group of interested landowners and other citizens from a three county area that has formed in response to concerns over the quality and quantity of water in the Big Muddy Creek. You can find out about all the Big Muddy Watershed activities at www.bigmuddywatershed.com.

The District also continues to publish this

newsletter and you catch the radio program at 10:00 am every other Tuesday on KATQ, 100.1 FM or 1070 Am.

You said the Sheridan County Conservation District should concentrate its education and service information efforts on full-time farmers and ranchers and state and local politicians followed by the local business community, national politicians, and schools.

The District's main focus is and always has been and always will be on the full-time producer. However, with limited availability of funding and grant prospects, it is imperative that every opportunity be used to combine information for producers and education for the general public.

Educating Sheridan County youth in the ways of conservation is very important to the success of the District. Just one of the many devices used by the district is the Rolling River Trailer. The Trailer is an interactive, hands river model that can be manipulated and molded to show the cause and effect of erosion, construction, and farm practices on rivers and streams.

In the political arena the District utilizes all of the service of the Montana Association of Conservation Districts and the National Association of Conservation Districts. These two organizations, along with the efforts of the District Supervisors in Sheridan County combine for a very effective effort in the legislatures. The most important service the Sheridan County Conservation District can provide is conservation planning, then cost-share programs, information, soil survey and soil information, and erosion and sediment control

The District has a very positive, long-time relationship with both the local NRCS and FSA offices. Cost-share and information programs from these agencies continue to evolve, as does the family farm.

The District's partnership with NRCS in con-

ervation planning, soil information and surveys, and erosion programs is especially rewarding. The results of this collaboration can be seen throughout the County. The District also has the unique roll with NRCS in providing local input to federally funded programs. These programs can be tailored to fit local needs with the appropriate input.

We also asked you to tell us what you think is the area most in need of natural resource conservation assistance. You told us the area most in need is grazing followed by the Big Muddy Creek, crop rotation, helping young farmers, and salinity.

The District has acknowledged your input about the most important conservation needs in Sheridan County with the study of the Big Muddy and a valuable crop rotation EQIP program from NRCS. NRCS also provides a beginning farmer program that increases the agency's cost-share substantially.

The District and NRCS work very closely with Montana Salinity Control (MSCA) in that area. MSCA currently has approximately 30 projects in Sheridan County and is involved in several new ventures every year. MSCA has been working in Sheridan County since 1985 and their Board of Directors includes one of the District's Supervisors.

If you have a topic or situation you feel needs our attention or you need assistance with, please give us a call at 406-765-1801 or stop by the office at 119 N. Jackson in Plentywood.



Froid Research Farm Tour Is June 23

(Gina Snyder, Roosevelt County Extension Agent)

The 2005 Froid Research Farm Tour is scheduled for June 23 starting at the research farm at 1:00 p.m. with registration. The research farm is located 8 miles north of Culbertson on Highway 16.

At 1:15 p.m., Paul Miller, Founder, President and Board Director of Sustainable Systems, LLC will talk about the transition from Montola to Sustainable Systems, biofuels and what the future of the company will be in Culbertson.

At 1:30 p.m. the busses will board for the Off Farm Tour featuring crops such as peas, lentils, alfalfa and other dry land rotational crops in the area. Producers will be led by Terry Angvick, Sheridan County Extension Agent; Sue Blodgett, Montana State University Extension Entomologist; Andy Lenssen, USDA-ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory Weed Ecologist and Gina Snyder, Roosevelt County Extension Agent, to learn about the rotational benefits, insect and weed management and growing information of rotational crops in the area.

At 3:30 p.m. the busses will return from the Off Farm portion of the tour and participants will ride on wagons to view research being done by USDA-ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory (NPARL) scientists. Research will include a wheat/pea rotation study by USDA-ARS NPARL Soil Scientist Jed Waddell, a cover crop trial by USDA-ARS NPARL Soil Scientist Upendra M. Sainju and an alternate vs. stacked rotation study done by Andy Lenssen and a team of USDA-ARS NPARL scientists. The On Farm tour portion will also include a soil horizon demonstration pit to show how our farming practices affect our soils and to view the structures that naturally occur in our soils.

The day will wrap up with a steak supper sponsored by the Sheridan and Roosevelt County Conservation Districts.

This traditional research tour is sponsored by the Sheridan and Roosevelt County Conservation Districts, USDA-ARS Northern Plains Agricultural Research Laboratory – Sidney, MT, and Montana State University Extension. We have a fun and educational day planned and hope to have a good turnout for the tour again this year.

CONSERVATION DATES

JUNE

- 14 SCCD Board Meeting—7:00 pm
Flag Day
- 19 Fathers Day
- 23 Froid Research Farm Tour

JULY

- 4 Independence Day
- 12 SCCD Board Meeting—7:00 pm
- 14 Williston Research Extension Center
Field Day
- 19 Eastern Ag Research Center Field Day
Sidney

JULY

- 21 25th Annual Swank Variety Tour
North Poplar

AUGUST

- 2-4 Mon Dak Regional Ag Open
Williston

NOTICE







Visit Sheridan County Conservation District's web page at : <http://sheridan.mt.nacdn.net>

Our services and programs are provided without regard to race, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or religious affiliation.

NO PERSON MAY COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION ON ANY PROJECT FACILITIES OR APPROPRIATE WATER PRIOR TO APPROVAL OF THE PROJECT BY THE DISTRICT AND RECEIPT OF A RESERVED WATER USE AUTHORIZATION. THIS IS TO PROTECT THE POTENTIAL IRRIGATOR FROM INVESTING MONEY IN A SYSTEM FOR WHICH LEGAL USE OF THE WATER CAN NOT BE APPROVED AND THUS CAN NOT BE USED

CONSERVATION FRIENDS

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

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	 <p>Plentywood Power Equipment Co. 804 East 1st Avenue—Plentywood, MT 59254 (406) 765-1531</p>	 <p>Rocky Mountain Bank Plentywood 765-2265</p>	
	<p>FARMERS UNION OIL CO. Of Plentywood 765-1171 <i>Fertilizer—Petroleum—Tires</i></p>	<p>J/G BOLSTAD ANGUS "Quality Seed Stock is Job #1 Jon and Gwen HC 61, Box 12—Homestead, MT 59242 (406) 963-2325</p> 	
		 <p>Stockman Bank Plentywood, MT— Phone 765-2460</p>	