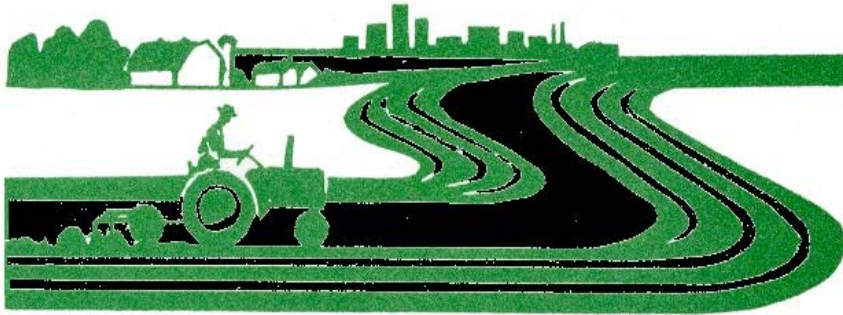


Sheridan County Conservation Notes



Conservation District

Jeff Wivholm - Chairman
Rom Hedges - Vice Chairman
Jon Bolstad - Supervisor
Tim Holte - Supervisor
Kent Nathe - Supervisor
Todd Marsh - Supervisor
Manuel Vazquez - Supervisor
Steve Hove - Associate Supervisor
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Mickey McCall - Technician

NRCS

Monica Friedrich - District Conservationist
Tim Solberg - Soil Con.
Ryan W. Young - Soil Con. Tech.

Sheridan County Conservation District

119 N. Jackson
Plentywood, Mt 59254
406-765-1801
<http://sheridan.mt.nacdnet.org/>

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Get Your Tree Order in now. There's still time, but you'd better hurry! Call 765-1801, ext. 101

Sheridan County Conservation District meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month in the Conference Room of the USDA Building. The public is welcome to attend. For time and date verification, please call our office at 765-1801 ext. 101, or go to sheridan.mt.nacdnet.org

Your comments are always welcome and appreciated. Please let us know what you think. Just Drop us a note at: 119 N. Jackson Plentywood, MT 59254 or email us at judy.benson@mt.nacdnet.net

2007 Conservation Cooperator of the Year Award to Nathan and Jessica Shackelford



Each year when the cooperatoer of the year is chosen, it is always a difficult choice, as Sheridan County is blessed with some very conservation minded farmers and ranchers.

This year was no different. However, one operation stood out from the others, simply because of the complexity, and the sheer number of acres of both cropland and rangeland being impacted by the conservation plan.

The NRCS EQIP program was utilized in cost sharing the following conservation practices:

Native Grass Seeding
Tame Grass Seeding
Filter Strips
Noxious Weed Control
Conservation Crop Rotation
Soil Testing

Wetlands and Rock-piles

By Tim Solberg
USDA/NRCS
Plentywood, MT



Growing up in western North Dakota during the 1970's, I remember it rained more and more often than it does now. I remember our farmland was definitely different during the 70's than it is now. We had several low spots that stayed wet for a long time and some years, and my Dad never did get them seeded. Many of them had standing water in them for the entire summer and others eventually dried up. We used to summer-fallow ½ and crop ½, which increased the rainfall runoff and created more standing water and wet spots. I remember hunting ducks in some of our neighbor's sloughs back in the 70's that are now being farmed through. The majority of our wet or "low spots" were small in nature and were really good spots for a kid to get the tractor stuck! I remember my Dad getting stuck a time or two with the drills full of durum or the cultivator, so it wasn't always "the kids" fault! The other thing we did was to dump all our rocks in those wet spots and now we have some pretty good sized rock piles in those wetlands. Now I wish we had never done that because it added to the amount of obstacles we have to go around with today's large equipment.



Fast forward to 2007 and a lot of things have changed since the 70's. Some of the most noticeable things include rainfall amounts, farming practices, crops being grown, size of the equipment being used, input costs and the development of the CRP program. The one thing that hasn't changed is the fact that

(Continued from page 1)

Water Developments
Cross Fencing
Prescribed Grazing

This producer was always very amiable, easy to work with, and always finished what he started.

On behalf of the Sheridan County Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, congratulations to the 2007 Conservation Cooperator of the year: Nathan & Jessica Shackelford.

Supervisors Elections

Incumbent District Supervisors Todd Marsh and Kent Nathe have filed for reelection to represent the Sheridan County Conservation District for another four-year term. Elected supervisors' terms are four years and start on January 1 following the election. Election of the two candidates will be held in conjunction with the county general election to be held November 4, 2008. Each candidate filed a nominating petition, signed by ten qualified electors living within the conservation district, with the Sheridan County Clerk and Recorder prior to March 20, 2008. Our District Board of Supervisors consists of five elected supervisors, two appointed supervisors and one associate supervisor. Current members of the Sheridan County Conservation District Board are: Elected Supervisors, Jon Bolstad, Rom Hedges, Tim Holte, Todd Marsh, Kent Nathe; Urban Supervisors, Jeff Wivholm (Chairman), representing City of Medicine Lake, Manuel Vasquez, representing City of Plentywood; and Associate Supervisor, Steve Hove. The Conservation District Board meets the second Tuesday of each month at the USDA Building, 119 N Jackson in Plentywood. The public is welcome to attend.

Newsletter is Now Available on the Internet

"Sheridan County Conservation Notes" is now available on the Internet. Just go to the Sheridan County Conservation District Web Site at <http://sheridan.mt.nacdn.net> and click on "Newsletters". Then select the edition of "Sheridan County Conservation Notes" you want to see.

You can also find the Agendas and Minutes from the Sheridan County Conserva-

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all of those gumbo clay "low spots" are still there on my farm, except now I recognize them as wetlands. As the wetland specialist for the NRCS here in Plentywood, I now understand the purpose and importance of wetlands throughout this important geographic area of the Dakota's and Eastern Montana. Even though I grew up surrounded by wetlands, I never really knew just how important wetlands were. I guess I took them for granted just like everyone else.

If you want to see just how important our home is in the big picture of the wetlands world, get on your computer and do a Google search for Prairie Pothole Region or Missouri Coteau and take a look for yourself. The wetlands of the Missouri Coteau as well as the prairie pothole regions are the major waterfowl production areas in North America. These wetlands formed when the glacier was retreating, it stopped or slowed its pace for thousands of years, melting slowly to create the characteristic pothole topography of this region.

One of the most frequently asked questions the farmers in my family, my wife's family, or neighboring farmer friends ask me now goes something like this. "What makes a wetland a wetland and why should the government care about what happens to wetlands on private property"? Let me try to explain. The term wetland is all encompassing and it is kind of misleading. In fact, wetlands don't have to be wet all of the time in order to be considered a wetland.

There are many kinds of wetland types including: permanent, semi permanent, seasonal and temporary to name a few. A few key factors in determining what type of a wetland you may have include the following:

- The size of the area that fills or feeds into the wetland.
- The number of days the area is inundated by water and the depth of water.
- The soil type found on site, i.e. sandy, silty or clayey.

These factors will also determine what a wetland will look like on the landscape, as this is what determines the types of plants found throughout the wetland and its surroundings. In other words, wetlands can be very complex in nature. I think wetlands are kind of like snowflakes, in the sense that they are all unique, even though they are made of similar materials. Some of the benefits wetlands provide include the following:

- Erosion Control
- Water Quality
- Ground water Recharge
- Wildlife Habitat

The 1985 U.S. farm bill provided for conservation subsidies and, in a "swampbusters" provision, withdrew agricultural subsidies from farmers who drained wetlands. As a result, grass replaced wheat in many areas, providing habitat for many bird species and other animals which has led to an increase in their populations. The program also aided the efforts of the family farmers to keep their land by providing funds that counteracted economic losses resulting from low grain prices. When the 1985 farm bill was written, it protected wetlands from being altered or negatively impacted from their natural state. The term "alter" means any activity that causes a wetland to be filled or drained. So why should the average farmer care about that? Well, don't kill the messenger, but this is where things can get interesting. If you "alter" (fill or drain) a wetland, you could lose your farm program payments! Yeah, that is a big deal! So the bottom line, and my recommendation to anyone wanting to do some work in or around wetlands in the future, would be to visit your local NRCS office first. No, we are not a regulatory agency or the "wetland cops". We are however a good source of information that could lead to increasing your farm profits while benefiting wetlands at the same time. Now that I have your attention with the words profit and wetlands, give your local NRCS office a call. In Sheridan County call 406-765-1801.

Todd Marsh Reappointed

Todd Marsh was reappointed as the Sheridan County Conservation District liaison to the Montana Salinity Control Association at the January 8 SCCD board meeting.

Todd will represent the Conservation District for future communication with the Montana Salinity Control Assn. regarding salinity seep reclamation.

Membership from conservation district supervisors in 33 counties makes up the Montana Salinity Control Association. This internationally recognized organization headquartered in Conrad, Montana provides expert technical assistance in the reclamation and control of saline seeps in agricultural areas.

What is a saline seep? You may have seen white, powdery-looking spots in the low areas of fields. These spots are seeps, and they have adverse effects on water quality, wildlife, and other resources, not to mention agricultural production.

Carbon Sequestration Meeting Scheduled

The National Carbon Offset Coalition (NCOC) has scheduled an information and signup meeting for April 9th in Plentywood in the Bicentennial Room at the Sheridan County Courthouse and begins at 1:30 pm.

Additional information about NCOC and the carbon sequestration program can be found on the Internet at www.ncoc.us.

We will be mailing invoices in mid-June to our Conservation Friends and Newsletter Sponsors that advertise in our newsletter. Our billing year is July 2008 through June 2009. We appreciate our Friends and Sponsors continued support helping to defray the high costs of producing our newsletter. The Sheridan County Conservation Newsletter is published quarterly. We welcome your comments and would appreciate any suggestions you have for our newsletter.

(Continued from page 2)

tion District's Board of supervisor meetings on <http://sheridan.mt.nacdn.net.org>. Just click on "Minutes/Agendas" and view the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the board and the minutes from last month's meeting. Or, you can select the meeting you are interested in and peruse the minutes.

Still Time to Order Trees

We will be taking trees orders through the end April for early May delivery. If you are interested in placing an order, please contact us soon as possible as nursery quantities are getting low. Stop in at the office for an order form or call us at 406-765-1801 ext. 101.

It's That Time of Year Again.....

To sign up for cost share programs (like EQIP) with NRCS. Sign up before June 1 for 2009 funding. We don't have any big changes, but continue to offer cost-share for typical practices like:

Cropland Practices – No-till, soil testing (including precision ag), legumes, alfalfa in rotation, saline seep, grass seeding, organic farming conversion

Rangeland Practices – Livestock water (pipelines, tanks, wells, spring developments), range renovation (chiseling), noxious weed control, prescribed grazing, fences.

Also included are certain windbreak renovation projects.

This list isn't all inclusive, and we will attempt to solve conservation related problems on each farm/ranch by working with you individually. There will be a requirement this year to fill out a workbook which is basically an inventory of your operation so we can best help you with your conservation needs.

Remember, EQIP is for producers who are not already using these practices, but are ready to adopt them now. Stay tuned for programs that may fit your operation better if and when the new Farm Bill is approved.

DNRC seeks summer help for wildfire season

Helena, MONT. – The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is now accepting applications for firefighter and fire support positions next summer. Details on available positions, locations,

and application materials are available on DNRC's Web site, www.dnrc.mt.gov/jobs.

"Depending on the status of our returning work force, we may have a number of positions available throughout western Montana, including Missoula, Lincoln, Anaconda, Kalispell, Libby, Plains, Helena and Dillon," said Paula Rosenthal, DNRC Fire Information Officer. "This is a great opportunity for college students, teachers, or others who are looking for summer seasonal work."

Positions that could be available include helicopter crew members, engine bosses, radio operators, dispatchers and fuel truck drivers, Rosenthal said.

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age at the time of hiring. All persons involved in firefighting duties are required to pass a physical fitness test within three weeks of employment.

The deadline for seasonal job applications is 5 p.m. on March 27, 2008. For complete job listings and more information, visit the DNRC Web site.

Montana DNRC is an equal opportunity employer.

Eastern Plains RC&D Has New Coordinator

The Eastern Plains Resource Conservation & Development Area recently acquired a new Coordinator.

Dick Iverson, a long-time NRCS employee was hired as the new Coordinator in early March, 2008. Iverson replaces Mike Carlson who retired in January of this year and will be headquartered at the 16 county RC&D office in Sidney.

The Eastern Plains RC&D includes the counties of Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley and Wibaux, and provides local decision makers with technical information and assistance and the necessary access to resources to better manage, conserve, protect, and utilize the area's natural and human resources.

You can contact the RC&D at 2745 W. Holly St. in Sidney, MT 59270 or call 406-433-2103.

CONSERVATION DATES

Apr.	1	April Fool's Day
	8	SCCD Board Meeting ~ 10:00 AM
	15	Income Tax Day
	22	Earth Day
May.	1	May Day
	11	Mother's Day
	13	SCCD Board Meeting ~ 7:00 PM
	18	Armed Forces Day
	26	Memorial Day-Office Closed
Jun.	10	SCCD Board Meeting ~ 7:00 PM
	14	Flag Day
	15	Father's Day
	21	First Day of Summer
	26	Froid Research Farm Tour

Please thank our sponsors for their support in bringing our Newsletter to you.

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

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

NOTICE

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

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