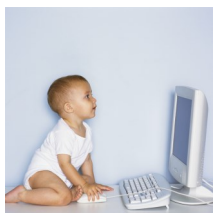


# Conservation News

## McCone County Conservation District

### Conservation District's New Website



The Conservation District is debuting its new website at [www.mcconecountycd.com](http://www.mcconecountycd.com). Each of the tabs are chock full of links that you can view and you can also print forms here.

We will be updating programs and photos as they become available. Our newsletter will be linked first. You can be in the know about conservation news before it reaches everyone's mailbox! And it's in color!

Let us know if you prefer to receive your newsletter by email by clicking on the link provided to our email address: [Mcconecountycd@yahoo.com](mailto:Mcconecountycd@yahoo.com).

Feedback and comments are always welcomed.

### SPRING SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP RECAP

The Spring Soil Health Workshop was held at the McCone County Fairgrounds on February 12, 2014 and was well attended by local producers.

It began at 10:00am with a presentation from Sue Fitzgerald, NRCS District Conservationist for Garfield County. Sue discussed biological control of the Canada thistle with the use of weevils and gall flies. In test areas conducted through 2013, Garfield County has seen limited, but noted decrease in Canada thistle growth where bugs were released. Interestingly, they noticed a correlation between annual precipitation and how that may play a big part in the effectiveness of the insects. She stated that biological control is inconclusive, but suggested that if integrated with traditional measures, can be a weapon in the arsenal against Canada thistle. Ken Nelson, MSU Extension County Agent, along with Scott Heide, Weed Control discussed the County spray program and how the county combats Canada thistle.

At 11:00am, Mark Henning, NRCS Area Agronomist from Miles City spoke about the importance of soil biology and why microbes matter. He discussed the inter-relationship between microbial life to healthy soil. He stated that if you don't feed your soil, then there is nothing that feeds the beneficial fungi that create glomalin, a glue-like substance, that holds healthy soils together. Less glomalin, more compaction. Soil compaction reduces crop yields and farm profits. Cover crops along with no-till operation goes a long way in creating healthy soils.

After the sponsored lunch by FES, the workshop continued with guest speaker, Rick Bieber. Rick is a Soil Caretaker from Trail City, SD. He began no-till farming in 1987 and has added cover crops into his farm's soil health management plan. He compared year to year analysis of crop yields per inch of rain and it was noticed by attendees that his no-till operation using cover crops have significantly improved his bottom line. He invited the general public to visit his farm in Trail City to see his operation at work.

The Conservation District was awarded grants through DNRC to provide cost share opportunities, so if you are interested, please contact us at 406-485-2744 x100.

Volume 14, Issue 1  
Spring 2014

### Inside this issue:

2014 Farm Bill	2
Soil Health Photos	3
More Photos / Spring	4
Mothers Day Lilacs	5
DRWA	5
Supervisors Wanted	5
Calendar	6

To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves.

~Mahatma Gandhi

### In the News

- Legislation
- DRWA
- Education

#### Contributors:

Johnna Blankenship, NRCS  
Mandi Nay, DRWA  
Mary Hendrix, MCCD



## 2014 Farm Bill

### By Johnna Blankenship

The new Farm Bill includes the following changes to Natural Resource Conservation Service programs:

Funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program has been allocated through 2022.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) will be rolled into the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). All of the conservation practices applicable to addressing resource concerns for wildlife under WHIP will now be available as EQIP practices. Existing WHIP contracts will be administered as before with no change to practice standards or payment rates.

Easement programs such as the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) are to be merged into the new Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). Prioritization of easement allocations will be the responsibility of NRCS State Offices.

The Sage Grouse Initiative will be supported by EQIP and ACEP.

The sign-up the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is continuous; we will be accepting applications for this program for fiscal year 2015 until sometime in June of this year. EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers. EQIP contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land. Producers in McCone County are actively encouraged to call the Field Office to learn more about this program and how it can be used to put your conservation plan into action.

The sign-up for 2014 CSP ended on Friday February 7. CSP is a continuous sign-up also, so applications are now being accepted for the next program cycle. There may be another 2014 sign-up. We are assured that there will be a 2015 sign-up regardless of whether or not there are two in 2014. Please call Johnna with questions.

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



**We owe our existence....to the top precious few inches of our planet's life-giving soil**

Did you know?

- \* By the year 2050, Earth's population is expected to reach 9 billion.
- \* Farmers will need to produce as much food in the next 40 years as they have in the last 500.
- \* Each day prime farmland is turned into neighborhoods and shopping malls.

Excerpt from "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil"

**Ensuring the health of our soil is critical to our long-term ability to feed the growing world population.**

### Soil health workshop photos



Conservation District Board of Supervisors: Jenny Garoutte, Emily Guldberg, Larry Nagel, Steve Wanderaas. Not pictured: Matt Beery



Presenters: Mark Henning, NRCS (center), Rick Bieber, SD producer (right). Local producer, Kurt Voss (left)



Presenter Sue Fitzgerald, NRCS and local producer, Kevin Guldberg

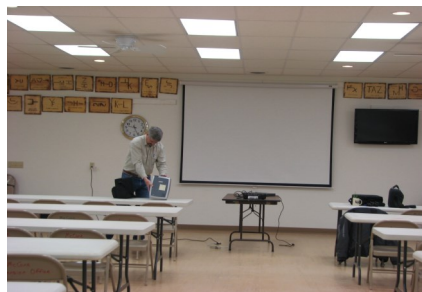
Free Weeds  
U Pick 'Em



~Author Unknown



Some of the attendees



Ken Nelson, Extension setting up



**Thank you Mark Henning & Sue Fitzgerald-NRCS for your technical assistance**



### More Soil health workshop photos



Lunch time! Johnna Blankenship, NRCS and Emily Guldborg, Supervisor



Greg Nagel and Larry Nagel, Supervisor



Attendees after conclusion of workshop

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.

~Proverb



SPRING

When the weather warms up just a bit, spring feels like it is just around the corner. In Montana, where spring may not arrive until May or June, getting ready for the upcoming season may just take the edge off seasonal cabin fever and also ensure a successful growing season in the summer. Here's just a few early spring clean up ideas that you could do now to save time later.

- ◆ Trees and Shrubs: Prune away dead and damaged branches.
- ◆ Perennials and Grasses: Cut back and divide perennials as needed.
- ◆ Beds and Borders: Clean up around plants and rake out borders and beds.
- ◆ Lawn Care: Prep damaged lawn areas for spring seeding.
- ◆ Paths and Patios: Neaten up hardscape surfaces.
- ◆ Fences and Trellises: Patch or replace and paint worn wood posts, fences and trellises.



\* Smart Spring Yard Cleanup ideas from "This Old House" online.

There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew.

~Marshall McLuhan, 1964

EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22, DO SOMETHING BENEFICIAL FOR

OUR LITTLE CORNER OF THE PLANET!

Thank you Ken Nelson-Extension for securing applicator points for our attendees

## School Kids! Mother's Day Lilacs



**Mother's Day will be here before you know it and the Conservation District is here to help with a great idea for Mom.**

**This year, we will be working with Circle and Vida schools offering conservation grade common lilacs for purchase. Each plant will be \$1.25 each.**

**Order forms will be sent home April 28th, please return it with payment to your school by May 1st. Plants will be delivered to each school and will be sent home with students on May 8th.**

**We would love to hear from homeschoolers, too.**

**If you have any questions, please contact the us at 406-485-2744 x100.**

### Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority (DRWA)

By Mandi Nay

DRWA is the rural water program planning construction in the counties of McCone, Garfield, Dawson, Prairie and Richland.

Recently, residents just outside of Circle requested information from DRWA and the possibility of providing a pipeline to them in the near future.

DRWA would like to hear from you if you reside immediately outside of Circle on Highway 13 or on Highway 200. We are attempting to get information on volumes, costs and feasibility involved in a pipeline potentially being constructed soon.

We continue to move forward with plans to provide water to the entire service area. We are waiting on pending decisions in Congress regarding potential funding options for us.

If you may be interested in enrolling to be part of DRWA please contact Mandi.

[drwa@midrivers.com](mailto:drwa@midrivers.com)

(406) 485-3792

[www.midrivers.com/~drwa](http://www.midrivers.com/~drwa)



### Supervisor Openings



Two supervisor positions are open on the McCone County Conservation District board. We are looking for a dedicated individuals that will promote conservation in the district. One candidate should reside in town (Urban Supervisor) and the other candidate should reside rurally (Rural Supervisor). If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Steve Wanderaas, Board Chairman at 406-650-7864.

**Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer. ~Author Unknown**

### Photos Wanted

We are looking to put together a gallery of conservation themed local photos on the website titled "Winter / Spring in McCone County" following the seasons. If you have recent photos, please submit them in a jpeg format to [Mcconecountycd@yahoo.com](mailto:Mcconecountycd@yahoo.com). Please let us know who took the picture and it's location! Here's a few ideas:

- Wildlife (birds, animals) & Livestock
- Buildings (farm, silos, town)
- Weather (storms, sunrise/sunset, moon phases)
- Trees, vegetation, streams and rivers

**Thank you Rick Bieber for sharing your first hand knowledge and experience**



MARY HENDRIX, DISTRICT  
ADMINISTRATOR, EDITOR

## MCCONE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Find us on the Web!  
[www.mcconecountycd.com](http://www.mcconecountycd.com)

### Board Members

Steve Wanderaas, Chairman  
Emily Guldberg, Supervisor  
Matt Beery, Supervisor  
Jenny Garoutte, Supervisor  
Larry Nagel, Urban Supervisor

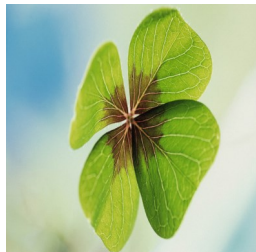
### Partner in Conservation

Johnna Blankenship, NRCS District

## POSTAL PATRON MCCONE COUNTY

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Circle, MT  
Permit No. 4

## Mark Your Calendars



Daylight Savings Time Begins—March 9, 2014

District Board Meeting 1pm—March 12, 2014

DRWA Board Meeting 1pm—March 13, 2014

St Patrick's Day—March 17, 2014

Vernal Equinox—March 20, 2014



April Fool's Day—April 1, 2014

District Board Meeting 1pm April 2, 2014

DRWA Board Meeting 1pm April 10, 2014

Easter—April 20, 2014

Earth Day—April 22, 2014

Mt Envirothon-April 28-29, 2014 Lewistown



District Board Meeting 1pm May 7, 2014

Mother's Day—May 11, 2014

DRWA Board Meeting 1pm May 15, 2014

Memorial Day—May 26, 2014

MARCH						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

2014

April 2014						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Calendars Michel Zbinden

May 2014						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Scheduled meetings are subject to date and time change. Meeting agendas will be posted one week prior to board meetings. The general public is welcome to attend. Please call 406-485-2744 for further questions.

Thank you to Ryan and The Circle Banner for helping us out with the logistics of the delivery for this Newsletter. You are Awesome!