

Conservation News

McCone County Conservation District

SOIL HEALTH FIELD TOUR

July 8—9, 2014

Sponsored by McCone and Petroleum County Conservation Districts

ITINERARY

Departure: Tuesday, July 8, 2014

Pick-up Locations: Winnett, Jordan, Flowing Wells and Circle

Day One Tours: Stone Mill Flax Plant, Richardton, ND
*Red Trail Ethanol Plant, Richardton, ND
Menoken Farms, Menoken, ND

Lodging: Comfort Suites, Bismarck, ND

Day Two Tours: Tour Operations in Burleigh County, ND

Departure: Wednesday, July 9, 2014 for Montana

Registration: To register for the tour or for more information, please call the District office at 406-485-2744 x100.

Cost: The cost of the tour will be \$100.00 per person. It is the responsibility of the individual to pay for their rooms and incidentals.

Tour includes: Bus trip tour, sack lunches for both days, snacks and dinner at Menoken Farms.

Rooms: A block of rooms have been reserved at the Comfort Suites in Bismarck, the cost is \$89.00 plus tax for the night of July 8, 2014. A hot breakfast is included with your night's lodging. Room reservations may be made until July 1 by calling the District office. A credit card to hold the room will be required. You may cancel your room up to 24 hours prior to arrival.

* Time permitting

Volume 14, Issue 2

Summer 2014

Inside this issue:

Soil Health Field Trip, Tree Sale & Mom's Day Lilacs 1

Canada Thistle 2

Water Reservations, 310 Law, DRWA News 3

Salt Cedar, MT Envirothon 4

Rain Gardens 5

Pollinators, Farm and Water Safety Tips 6

Makoshika Field Trip, Rolling River Trailer 7

Calendar 8



In the News

- Legislation
- DRWA
- Education

Contributors:

Mary Hendrix, MCCD

Johnna Blankenship, NRCS

Mandi Nay, DRWA

2014 Tree Sale



The 2014 Tree Program was successful with 40 orders for 2600 assorted trees and shrubs. We also sold over a thousand trees in the Tree Sale! Thank you to everyone who purchased trees through the Conservation District this year. The 2015 Tree Order forms will be included in the Winter Newsletter available at the beginning of December.

WOW!

Mother's Day Lilac Sale

Circle, Vida, Prairie Elk Colony School students & County Homeschoolers purchased **460** lilacs for Moms for Mother's Day! Thank you to all Teachers, Administrators, Parents and Donors!



NRCS

By Johnna Blankenship

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) is a member of the sunflower family (Asteraceae). It is native to North Africa, Asia and southern Europe. We are told that it came to North America in the 1600's as a contaminant in crop seeds. Since then it has spread all over the continental US and southern Canada; it is a Montana category 2B noxious weed. Some characteristics of Canada thistle are:

- * Perennial lifespan. Plants live for more than two years overwintering in the root then emerging in the spring as rosettes. They reproduce both by seed and by production of new independent plants from horizontal root structures called creeping rhizomes.
- * Dioecious: Male and female flowers are produced on separate plants.
- * Produces relatively few seeds per (female) plant, one to five thousand, compared to spotted knapweed which can produce over 40,000 seeds per plant.
- * Seedlings grow slowly and are sensitive to competition. However, once established, a seedling can begin to develop the ability to reproduce through its own rhizomes in seven to eight weeks.
- * Most of the plant's reproductive energy is dedicated to vegetative propagation through the roots. A mature plant may develop horizontal roots extending 15 feet or more and vertical roots six to fifteen (some say more) feet deep.
- * Canada thistle will colonize or invade rangeland, pasture, cropland, roadsides, ditches and disturbed areas. It is known to reduce wheat yields by 15 to 60% in affected areas and can decrease production of alfalfa seed crops by 40% or more.
- * Considered a poisonous plant because it can accumulate nitrates and may contain high levels of sulfates in sulfate-rich soil.



Canada thistle is difficult to control because it is able to draw upon energy stored in its extensive root system to recover from damage to its above-ground structures. Treatments such as tillage may actually spread Canada thistle as even very small pieces of root (one quarter of an inch long) can generate new plants. Chemical control is typically recommended as part of a long-term, integrated control strategy. The success of chemical treatment depends on using the right herbicide in the right amount in the right place at the right time. Spring applications should target seedlings and rosettes or early growth prior to the bud stage. Chemical control during the vegetative stage is less effective than earlier application. Treatment of mature plants is not considered feasible since the above-ground plant structures are not actively translocating nutrients and will eventually die back without moving the herbicide to the root. Fall treatment of regrowth is effective because the plants are actively transporting nutrients to the root systems and will translocate the herbicide to the root system as well. MSU Extension, Montana Weed Control Association and the NRCS have information about and can assist with developing a plan to control Canada thistle.

Note: Canadian bacon, **Canada** thistle.

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



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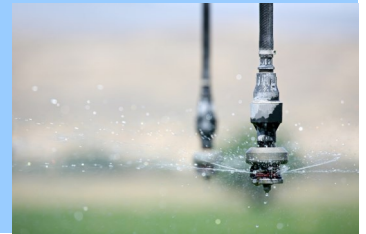
WATER RESERVATIONS

Water Reservation History: The 1973 Water Use Act made it possible for the State of Montana and the Federal government to reserve water for future consumptive uses or to maintain a minimum flow level or quality of water. To reserve water, a qualified public body must apply to the Board and establish the purpose of the reservation; the need for the reservation; the amount of water necessary for the purpose of the reservation; and that the reservation is in the public interest.

In 1978, the Board of Natural Resources and Conservation granted water reservations to fourteen Conservation Districts (CDs) in the Yellowstone River Basin. Ten CDs were granted reservations in the Upper Missouri River Basin in 1992 and eleven CDs were given reservations in the Lower and Little Missouri River Basins. McCone County holds water reservations on the Little and Lower Missouri River Basins.

The Purpose of the Conservation District Reservation: To reserve water for future agricultural development, as the demand for water increased both in state and out of state.

To learn more about water reservations, please visit our website www.mcconecountycd.com.



Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (also known as 310 Law)

This state law requires that any person planning to work in or near a perennial stream or river on private land obtain a 310 permit from their local Conservation District. The 310 Law insures that all projects on perennial streams are not damaging to the stream, its banks or to adjoining landowners.

Activities that require a 310 permit are culverts (installation and removal), bridges (installation & removal), riprap, diversions, dams, equipment crossings, pond construction, dredging, channel changes, fords, any other activity that physically alters or modifies the bed or banks of a perennial stream or river.

A person planning a project must contact the Conservation District to obtain a permit application. The permit must be approved prior to any activity in or near a stream. Failure to obtain a 310 permit may result in a misdemeanor or civil penalty with fines up to \$500 for each day the person continues the unauthorized activity. Also, restoration of the damaged stream may also be required.



Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority (DRWA)

By Mandi Nay

DRWA is happy to announce the first users will be brought online this summer. Richland County and the City of Sidney were instrumental in getting the pipeline constructed. Thank you Richland County and Sidney!

In addition, DRWA has been working with Interstate Engineering on planning for a water line to service the Town of Fairview. During the April DRWA Board Meeting, the decision was made to move forward with trying to secure funding to construct a line from Culbertson to Fairview. This line will service the Town of Fairview as well as many rural users between Culbertson and Fairview.

DRWA continues to work through the Bureau of Reclamations processes in an attempt to obtain Federal Authorization for the entire DRWA project. As we move forward, we continue with plans to provide water to the entire DRWA service area.

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

drwa@midrivers.com

(406) 485-3792

www.midrivers.com/~drwa



Salt Cedar

Salt cedar, an invasive tree from the Middle East, was first reported in Montana around 1960 in the Yellowstone and Big Horn River Drainages. Currently salt cedar is known to be in 21 counties in Montana along stream banks, reservoir shores and other wet areas. The flooding along the Missouri and Musselshell Rivers in 2011 was very conducive to salt cedar establishment and brought to the attention of land managers.

A mature salt cedar plant can produce half a million seeds each year. Each seed has a small tuft of hair that allows it to float on the wind or the waves for long distances. Salt cedar also reproduces vegetatively enabling the plant to spread at alarming rates and increasing the challenges of this controlling plant.

A kick-off meeting of the "Montana Salt Cedar Team" was held on April 23rd in Jordan, MT to assess interest in forming a group to strategically combat salt cedar within the Missouri and Musselshell River Basins of Montana. Three priorities emerged from the meeting:

- ◆ Control infestations strategically, working from the outermost known infestations downstream toward Fort Peck.
- ◆ Education of landowners and general public to encourage participation in salt cedar control efforts and correct identification of plants.
- ◆ Complete survey of salt cedar infestations needed from Great Falls to North Dakota border and in the Musselshell River Basin.

If you are interested in participating with the group or learning more about salt cedar, the next meeting will be held on August 27th from 10:00am to 3:00pm at the Garfield County Public Library in Jordan.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Rachel Frost, Missouri River Conservation District Council (MRCDC) Coordinator at 406-454-0056 or by email at: mrcdc@macdnet.org.

Excerpts taken from MRCDC March 2014 Newsletter and April 23rd Salt Cedar Planning Meeting Summary. Photo: Oregon.gov



Helena High School Team 4—Winner of the combined test and presentation scores.

2014 Montana Envirothon

Twenty-seven teams from Montana high schools and FFA attended the 2014 MT Envirothon held April 28 and 29 in Lewistown.

On day one, students were tested on knowledge in the areas of soil, aquatics, wildlife, range and forestry. In the afternoon, teams were given a fifth environmental issue: "Sustainable Agriculture/Locally Grown" as the current topic. The group then departed for a tour of Nyegard Farm in Grass Range.

One day two, students presented their solutions for the current issue topic before a panel of judges. Best oral presentation was won by Hamilton High School.

The team with the highest test scores was Whitefish High School Team 27. Each member was awarded a \$300 scholarship.

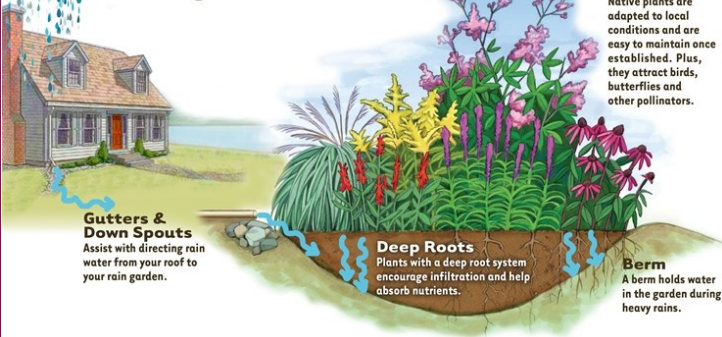
With the combined highest test and presentation scores, Helena High School Team 4 members were awarded \$700 scholarships. Usually, this team would represent Montana nationally, but unfortunately, it was cancelled. The 2015 National Envirothon will be held in Missouri.

My daddy, he was somewhere between God and John Wayne. ~ Hank Williams, Jr

Happy Father's Day to all the Dads out there!

Rain Garden—Capturing and Using the Rains of the Great Plains

How does a rain garden work?



A rain garden is a colorful, perennial planting designed to capture and use rain water that may otherwise run off. It is a garden in a shallow depression. It can be large or small. A rain garden is not a wetland and should not hold water for more than a few hours or a day at most. It is not a breeding ground for mosquitos.

Where to establish one: Locate a rain garden to intercept runoff from roofs, yards, drives or streets. It should not be built within 10 feet of foundation walls or on poorly drained sites. A rain garden should not be built over buried utilities or driver's vision. Do not construct a rain garden where prohibited by local ordinances or where subject to disturbance.

How to build one: Most can be constructed with equipment available to homeowners such as shovels, rakes and rototillers. A small rain garden of simple design can be built in a day. Here are some guidelines on building a rain garden:

- ◆ Do your homework first. Many design manuals are available, online and at public offices.
- ◆ Locate a proper site.
- ◆ Calculate square footage draining to the rain garden (from roof, yard, drive, etc)
- ◆ Mark outline of rain garden. Rain garden area should equal about 10% of the drainage area. Irregular margins are often more attractive.
- ◆ Evaluate soil compaction, texture and infiltration.
- ◆ Dig a 4-8 inch deep basin with a flat bottom. Excavated material can be placed on the downhill side or moved off-site. Avoid compaction during construction.
- ◆ Loosen 6-12 inches of the natural soil below the bottom of the rain garden.
- ◆ Large designs or sites with high clay content soils may require over-digging the basin 1-2 feet deep, backfilling with a well-blended mix of 70% sand and 30% organic material and shaping the top of this material into a 4-8 inch deep basin.
- ◆ Slope and pack any created berms, leaving a gentle slope that will be easy to maintain.
- ◆ Smooth, seed berm and plant the rain garden. Apply shredded wood mulch to conserve water and control weeds. Shredded mulch stays in place better than wood chips.

How to plant one: Use potted or bare root plants rather than seeds. Plant from April to September. Place the more water tolerant species near the bottom and drought tolerant near the edges.

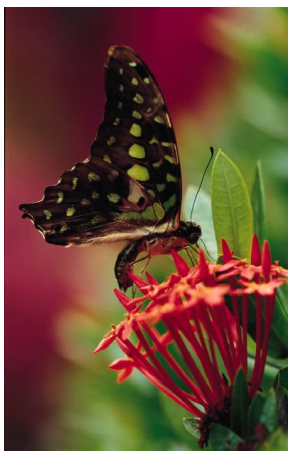
What to plant: You can plant either native or non-native species of flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees. Plants requiring constant moisture should not be planted in a rain garden.

Maintenance: Very little additional water or weeding is needed once one is established. Supplemental water is usually needed only to establish plants and during drought. Apply and renew mulch as needed. Leave vegetation standing over winter for snow catch, textural diversity and visual interest. In early spring, remove previous year's growth.

Excerpt from NRCS Rain Garden, Photo: watershedcouncil.org

Water Fact ~ three quarters of a living tree's weight is water

Be a Friend to Pollinators



Types of Pollinators

- ◆ Bees
- ◆ Butterflies & Moths
- ◆ Birds & Bats
- ◆ Beetles & Other Insects

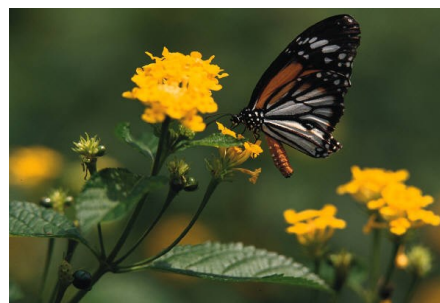


Did you know?

A world without pollinators would be a world without apples, blueberries, strawberries, chocolate, almonds, melons, peaches or pumpkins?

You can help by providing food and habitat to help them thrive.

- ◆ Use pollinator friendly plants in your landscape.
- ◆ Choose a mixture of plants for spring, summer and fall.
- ◆ Reduce or eliminate pesticides. Use plants that attract beneficial insects for pest control instead.
- ◆ Provide clean water for pollinators.
- ◆ Leave dead tree trunks in your landscape for wood-nesting bees and beetles.



Did you know?

The honey bee alone contributes to the production of many billions of dollars worth of crops in American every year.



See you at the Pollinator Booth at the County Fair!

Farm and Ranch Safety

Tips to address some common accident situations

- Before leaving a field to enter a roadway, make sure the Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem is clear of dirt and debris.
- Use pilot vehicles whenever possible while transporting equipment on a roadway.
- Never allow passengers on tractors or equipment.
- Be mindful of overhead power lines when using front-end loaders, forklifts, or augers.
- Never allow anyone near the rear of a tractor or around a power unit when a power take-off (PTO) is in use.
- A four-wheel ATV or utility vehicle can cause serious injury when used improperly or overloaded.
- Remind children that the farm shop and the area around it are not safe places to play. ~ Excerpt from SD Farm Bureau

Working safely may get old, but so do those practice it.

~ Author Unknown

Water Safety

Swimmers! Since most drowning victims had no intention of being in the water and many people drown within 10-30 feet of safety, it is important that you and your family learn to swim well.

Please remember:

- Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.
- Don't take chances by overestimating your swimming skills.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Never swim alone.

Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental deaths for persons 1-14 years of age and the sixth leading cause for all ages. Be safe this summer!

Seventy-five percent of our planet is water, can you swim? ~ Author Unknown

Makoshika Field Day

The sun was shining for forty-two 4th, 5th and 6th Circle Elementary school students and their teachers as they enjoyed a day at Makoshika Dinosaur Museum and Makoshika State Park on May 19th. They learned all about dinosaurs, the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods and that dinosaurs were terrestrial or land walking species only. Who knew that the species that flew or swam were merely reptiles and not dinosaurs! Thank you Kristy at the museum!

At Makoshika State Park, the kids learned more about dinosaurs, the geology of Makoshika, the different fossil layers, the K-T or extinction layer, erosion, park safety, stewardship, how to tread lightly and leave no trace when visiting this and other outdoor areas. Thank you Tom & Luke at the park!

Thank you to Principal Helen Murphy and teachers Colleen Stormer, Kim Gebhardt and Amy McCloy for a wonderful day!



Rolling River Trailer Field Day

Scott Kaiser with DNRC and the Conservation District traveled to Prairie Elk Colony to demonstrate the Rolling River Trailer on May 20th. The Colony School graciously hosted Vida School. Students ranged from the 1st to the 8th grade. We discussed the Missouri River nearby, stream dynamics, the effects of erosion, flooding, plants and animals in riparian environments and how changes upstream affects downstream areas. The students saw how water flowed through two different streams; one meandering and the other straightened. They saw the effects of water on both and then were asked to design their own streams with what they learned. It was a great teaching experience and the kids learned as they played! Mary was so interested in the process that she forgot to take photos! Apologies!

Why Do We Need Healthy Rivers?

Clean, healthy rivers are the lifeblood of our communities and are vital to our health, safety, and quality of life. Most Americans live within a mile of a river or stream and all of our drinking water comes directly or indirectly from rivers and streams.

By protecting and restoring rivers, we are protecting clean drinking water, creating jobs and recreation opportunities that benefit our economy, revitalizing our natural heritage for future generations.



From: americanrivers.org

Farm Water Use:

- A corn field of one acre gives off 4,000 gallons of water per day in evaporation.
- It takes about 6 gallons of water to grow a single serving of lettuce. More than 2,600 gallons is required to produce a single serving of steak.
- It takes almost 49 gallons of water to produce just one eight-ounce glass of milk. That includes water consumed by the cow and to grow the food she eats, plus water used to process the milk.
- About 6,800 gallons of water is required to grow a day's food for a family of four.
- The average American consumes 1,500 pounds of food each year; 1,000 gallons of water are required to grow and process each pound of that food—1.5 million gallons of water is invested in the food eaten by just one person! This 200,000-cubic-feet-plus of water-per person would be enough to cover a football field four feet deep.
- One mature tree in a riparian area can filter as much as 200 pounds of nitrates runoff per year.



MARY HENDRIX, DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATOR, EDITOR

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Find us on the Web!
www.mcconecountycd.com

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Partner in Conservation

Johnna Blankenship, NRCS District

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Mark Your Calendars



Board Meeting, June 4, 2014 -7pm
DRWA Meeting, June 13, 2014
Flag Day— June 14, 2014
Father's Day—June 15, 2014
Summer Solstice—June 21, 2014

JUNE 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					



Board Meeting, July 2, 2014 -7pm
Independence Day, July 4, 2014
Soil Health Trip, July 8-9, 2014
DRWA Meeting, July 11, 2014

JULY 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		



Board Meeting, August 6, 2014 - 7pm
County Fair, August 14-16, 2014
DRWA Meeting, August 15, 2014

AUGUST 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 / 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

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.

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