

CONSERVATION NEWS

McCONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP RECAP

The Soil Health Workshop was held on Wednesday, February 18th in Circle at the Fairgrounds and was well attended by local producers.

The program this year focused on:

- ♦ Salt cedar: a plant that is not often seen in McCone County except in small patches on Ft. Peck lake, some drainages and livestock dams
- ♦ Principles of soil health to the importance of crop diversity and weeds
- ♦ Different types of crop rotations
- ♦ Switching to a continuous no-till cropping system
- ♦ Evaporation & erosion: utilizing soil moisture efficiently through a full flex crop rotation



This Issue

Ashley Kiehl p. 2

CSP p.2

Noxious Weeds p.3

DRWA Annual Meeting p.4

Hansens Hedge Rose p.5

Mother's Day p.5

Natural Resource Concerns & Issues Local Working Group Meeting

The Local Working Group meeting was held at the Fairgrounds on February 23rd. Local producers, along with agency people from the BLM, DNRC, NRCS and US Fish & Wildlife Services, discussed natural resource concerns and issues in McCone County.

The top three resource concerns identified through this process were:

1. **Range Health**—over-use or under-use of rangeland, native & tame grass restoration, weed encroachment, bio-control of Canada thistle & leafy spurge and water development
2. **Soil Health**—develop baseline to see progress for reporting, cropland and range health
3. **Noxious Weeds**—urban locations, rural areas, lack of applicators and enhanced bio-controls)

Thank you to those who attended the meeting. Looks like we have some work to do!

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.”

~Edward Everett Hale

Cover crop cost share

The Conservation District was awarded a grant through DNRC to provide cost share opportunities towards the purchase of cover crop seeds, so if you are interested, please give us a call.



Daylight Savings
time begins
at 2am on
March 8th!

MEET ASHLEY KIEHL NEW SOIL

CONSERVATIONIST

Ashley Kiehl is the new NRCS Soil Conservationist in the Circle Field Office.

She has an AS degree in Rangeland Management from Northwest College in Powell, WY and in May 2014, a BS degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management from the University of Idaho in Moscow.

Ashley grew up on a large family ranch in Winnett, MT where they produce black angus cows and sheep. She says that, "they spent their whole lives making the cow herd black and all tractors green."

When she returns back home, she likes to ride her horses and spend time with friends and family. In Circle, she spends time knitting, a skill her grandmother recently taught her, quilting and playing with her kitten, Mickey.

She is happy to be here in Circle and is looking forward to getting to know the producers and the community.

Ashley fishing near Red Lodge—brookies for Breakfast!

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The deadline for applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program has been extended to March 15, 2015.



By Johnna Blankenship

There has been quite a lot of interest in this program in McCone County over the last eighteen months or so.

The Conservation Stewardship Program, or CSP, seems to be a good fit for many different types of agriculture operations in our area as ranchers and farmers look to protect their natural resources in ways that benefit the entire operation.

Through CSP, participants take additional steps to improve the resource conditions on their land—



Information about CSP and other USDA Farm Bill programs can be found online. Simply typing 'NRCS CSP' into the search bar will bring you to the CSP home page at www.nrcs.usda.gov > Home > Programs > Financial Assistance.

including soil, air and habitat quality, water quality and quantity, and energy conservation.

CSP provides two types of payments through five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices; and supplemental payments for adopting a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Payments are made soon as practical after October 1 of each fiscal year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year.

For more information or to discuss how this program can work for you, please call the Circle Field Office at (406) 485-2660 to schedule an appointment with Ashley and Johnna.

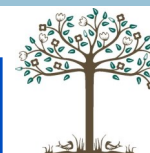


The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC, 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

We will also be accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) for fiscal year 2016 until June of this year.

Have you placed your tree order yet?
Accepting orders until March 20th!





Featured Noxious Weed: Houndstongue

Houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) is a biennial that grows 1 to 4 feet tall. Introduced from Europe, houndstongue is toxic and contains a pyrrolizidine alkaloid that causes liver cells to stop reproducing. Most animals avoid eating it because of its foul odor. Even if ingested as hay, it remains toxic. Animals may survive 6 months or longer after consuming a lethal amount.

Houndstongue inhabits pastures, meadows, roadsides and disturbed sites. During the first year of growth, houndstongue forms a rosette and a deep thick taproot. In the second year, a flowering stem is formed. The flowers bloom, seeds are set and then the plant dies.

The name 'houndstongue' was coined because the rosette leaves are broad and oblong in shape resembling a dog's tongue. It can be up to 12" in length and 3" in width. Leaves and stems are covered entirely in soft white hairs and leaves are soft to the touch.

The flowers of houndstongue are reddish-purple, have five petals and bloom from June to July. Due to its Velcro-like seeds, houndstongue spreads easily and is highly invasive. A single plant can produce up to 2,000 seeds. If your clothes or pets become covered with these seeds, please pick them off and dispose of them in the garbage or a fire. Throwing them on the ground will only start a new infestation.

WEEDS Q&A

Q: Hey Farmers and Ranchers!
Why care about noxious weeds?

A: Noxious weeds should be of concern to every farmer or rancher because they reduce yields in crops, in pastures and on the range. They spread easily & very rapidly.

On rangelands, noxious weeds compete with native grasses and forbs. They reduce range and pastureland for use by livestock. Most livestock will not eat noxious weeds, but if they do, the seeds can spread through the animals' manure and droppings.

Farmers should be concerned about noxious weeds in their



Field bindweed

Yellow star thistle

fields, on ditch banks and in fall areas around the fields. Noxious weeds consume fertilizer, water and crowd out desirable plants. Without control, they will spread throughout the field infesting crops and reducing yields.

Noxious weeds in crops are expensive & time consuming to control. However, starting with control measures will eliminate the necessity of quarantining crops that contain noxious weeds in the future. Controlling noxious weeds is a state law.

Farmers and ranchers need to act early to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. In the long run, early detection and a fast treatment program can save you a lot of time and money.

Source: "Why Should I Care About Noxious Weeds?" Montana Weed Control Association

Integrated Management of Houndstongue

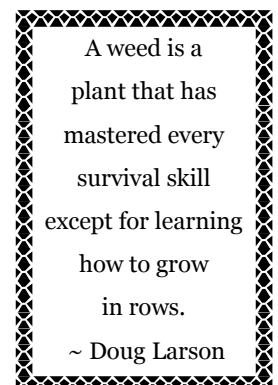
- **Grubbing & Hand pulling:** root crown must be removed
- **Chemical methods:** Herbicides such as 2, 4-D, metsulfuron and chlorsulfuron have been used to manage houndstongue on range, wildland and pasture sites.

See www.greenbook.net for additional information

NOT EFFECTIVE

- **Cutting, mowing & other forms of defoliation:** Taproots often store nutrients to support normal flowering & seed production
- **Prescribed burnings:** May destroy some seeds, but fire may stimulate germination and provide optimal growing conditions.
- **Biological control:** not approved for release in US.

Source: MSU Extension MontGuide MT199709AG Revised 8/09



SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP PHOTOS



*Dan Buerkle, Plevna Producer,
Ann Fischer, DC NRCS & Larry Nagel*



Mark Henning, Area Agronomist NRCS



Rachel Frost, Coordinator, MRCDC



Scott Ravenkamp, Hugo, CO Producer



No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn.
~ Hal Borland

DRWA ANNUAL MEETING



“water extensions planned to be constructed outside of Circle... four short extensions have been estimated....working on securing funding options.”

By: Mandi Nay
DRWA Coordinator

Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority held our annual meeting on Friday, February 13th.

An update was given on waterline extensions planned to be constructed outside of Circle.

Currently, four short extensions have been estimated and DRWA is working on securing funding options.

The four extensions include lines along Highway 13, Horse Creek Road, North Road, and Highway 200 toward Brockway. Nearly 40 households will have the ability to be serviced, using the Town of Circle as an interim water source.

Legislation was discussed.

DRWA has draft legislation currently awaiting introduction. The draft Bill would provide DRWA with Congressional Authorization and allow access to additional funding sources.

DRWA attended a Legislative Meet & Greet in Helena at the end of January. The Meet & Greet allowed DRWA to have one on one time with Legislators and the ability to discuss the benefits and needs for Rural Water Systems in Montana.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, DRWA held Officer Elections.

We are also looking for additional board members—2 to represent Dawson County and 1 for Richland County. If you are interested in serving on the board, have questions or for more information, please contact our office at (406) 485-DRWA (3792) or drwa@hotmail.com.

DRWA OFFICERS

Jerry Meissner
Chairman

Allen Rosaaen
Vice-Chairman

Jim Moos
Secretary

Henry Helgeson
Treasurer

Please join me in congratulating these gentlemen on their new positions. We look forward to continued partnership with and support from our communities.



Ashley Kiehl, NRCS & Steve Wanderaas, MCCD



*Cole James, Kevin Guldborg, Conrad Moline,
Frank Wright & Josh Murphy, MCCD*

Hansens Hedge Rose

Information and Planting Guide



Rosa rugosa 'Hansens' has single pink to white fragrant blossoms which appear in June and bloom all summer. Blossoms are followed by very large red hips in late summer and last all winter. Bumblebees are always visiting the blossoms on this rose.

Cold Hardiness: USDA Zone 2

Crown Height & Width: 4 to 6 feet

Light: Full sun to partial shade

Water: Intermediate drought tolerance

Thorns: Yes

PLANTING GUIDE

Preparation: If you have hard/clay soil, you may want to add sand or organic matter to the soil that you will be putting back into the hole.

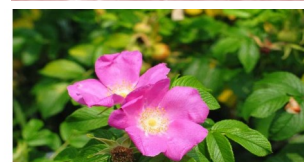
Bare Root: Dig hole 8-14" wide and 12-14" deep. Put 2" of water into the hole and allow the water to be soaked into the ground. Wait until the water has been absorbed. Hold the plant steady just about the root collar (lighter line above the roots) level with the ground and put the soil back into the hole. Fill the hole and lightly press in around the base of the plant. Water again. Apply 2-3" of mulch forming a well around the plant.

Watering: In the first month, water every 4-5 days adjusting for good rainfall days. Gradually phase into watering less and less.

Fertilizing: Don't fertilize during the first year. After the shrubs begin to leaf out in the second year, apply a time release formula fertilizer or organic matter.

Pruning: After the first couple of years, a pruning in late winter/early spring will keep them looking neat. Just cut back the oldest canes and any broken/damaged canes at ground level.

Uses: Conservation/Windbreaks—farmstead windbreaks, riparian plantings and highway beautification



Mother's Day is May 10th

Mother's Day will be here before you know it and we are here to help with another great idea for Mom!

This year, we will be working with local schools and offering Hansens Hedge Roses for purchase.

See information and planting guide on [← the left.](#)

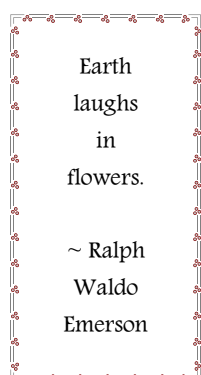
Each plant is \$1.50.

Order forms will be sent to home on April 13th.

Please return it with your payment to school by April 23rd.

Plants will be delivered to schools and sent home with students on May 7th.

If you have any questions, please call.



MCCONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

106 10th Street
P.O. Box 276
Circle, MT 59215

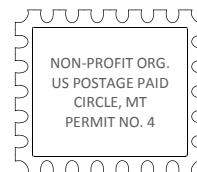
Phone: 406-485-2744 x100
Email: Mcconecountycd@yahoo.com
Website: www.mcconecountycd.com

Conservation District Board & Staff

Steve Wanderaas, Chairman
Casey Nay, Vice-chairman
Larry Nagel, Treasurer
Jenny Garoutte, Rural Supervisor
Brant Quick, Rural Supervisor
Josh Murphy, Rural Supervisor
Dusty White, Rural Supervisor
Mary Hendrix, Administrator

Partners in Conservation

Johnna Blankenship, DC, NRCS
Ashley Kiehl, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Mandi Nay, Coordinator, DRWA



MCCONE COUNTY POSTAL PATRON

MCCONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT CONSERVATION DISTRICT AUTHORITY

Mission Statement—By performing a leadership role in conservation for McCone County, the District will develop a more sustainable and economic resource management plan for the community.

Conservation District Authority—MCA 76-15-102. Declaration of policy. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of soil and soil resources of this state, for the control and prevention of soil erosion, for the prevention of floodwater and sediment damages, and for furthering the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water and therefore to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this state.



To Rural Supervisor Matt Beery

For sixteen years of service to the Conservation District Board

You will be missed!

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart. ~Elizabeth Andrew