



District Dispatch

67 YEARS OF CONSERVATION Est. January 14, 1942

Volume 10 Issue 1

600 East Hwy 12, Suite 1, Webster, SD 57274

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Winter 2009

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Dennis Skadsen, Project Coordinator

NRCS Staff

Ryan Forbes, Acting-Dist. Conservationist
Charlene Voss, Cons. Technician
Kim Kempton, Soil Scientist
Betsy Pearson, Conservation Assistant



Pictured front row left to right:

Sarah Gaikowski, Jessica Schiley, April Michlitsch, back row left to right: Ross Kwasniewski, Derek Zenk, Kirsten Johnson, and Karli Opitz

Annual Banquet

Day County Conservation District continues its outstanding involvement with the youth of Day County. Seven \$100 scholarships were awarded. **Sarah Gaikowski**—Daughter of Leon and Diane Gaikowski **Kirsten Johnson**—Daughter of Leigh and Kari Johnson **Ross Kwasniewski**—Son of Gary and Margaret Kwasniewski. **April Michlitsch**—Daughter of Dan and Grace Michlitsch **Karli Opitz**—Daughter of Kenny and Lori Opitz **Jessica Schiley**—Daughter of Jeff and Debra Schiley **Derek Zenk**—Son of Fred and Cindy Zenk received a \$100 award for their involvement in conservation. The scholarships were presented at the Day Conservation District Annual Appreciation Banquet on December 1st, 2008 in Waubay.

In addition to the scholarship recipients the board recognized the crew members for their diligent work in 2008. Highlights from 2008 included 77.6 acres of trees planted with 285 rolls of 500' fabric laid at 25 of the sites, cultivated 53.2 acres of tree belts, leased out the JD no-till drill to 24 landowners for seeding 1000 acres. Educational activities highlighted included Arbor Day, 1-2-3 at the Refuge, Water festivals, range and land judging, grazing workshops, and bird tour.

Grants Awarded

Day County Conservation District is proud to announce the Northeast Grazing Water Development grant was funded by the State Conservation Commission. The grant will provide cost share opportunities for tanks, pipelines, rural water hook ups, dugouts, and wetland creations.

Developing a reliable watering source is the key factor within a successful managed grazing system. By providing funding assistance, the project will benefit the livestock producer and a wide assortment of wildlife species. The project will protect the land from erosion while providing the general public with improved water quality.

Phase two of the NEGL grant was supported by the Conservation Commission and DENR with funding.

If your land lies within the boundaries of the included watersheds you would be eligible for cost share incentives for various projects including ag waste systems, cross fencing, riparian buffers, and improved grazing management to name a few.

In addition, the district was awarded a minimum of \$25,000 by the Governor's office to provide large trees (6-8' tall) at half price.

If you are interested in these opportunities please contact Cindy at the office or email cindy.zenk@sd.nacdnet.net

Inside this Issue—Insert **HANDPLANT ORDER FORM**

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Farm Show Highlights

Day County Conservation District along with NRCS and FSA employees will be at the farm show January 30 and 31st. We will have information on the funded grant projects as well as opportunities to win some trees. Kelly Cape, CED will present information on the USDA farm programs during the Crop improvement meeting Friday at 12noon.

The Natural History and Wildlife of Northeast South Dakota will be presented by Dennis Skadsen on Saturday at 9am. Cover Crops and soil management will be featured by Rick Bednarek, NRCS Soil Scientist on Saturday January 31st at 10:00am. Excellent opportunity to ask questions about this increasingly popular alternative cropping.

The featured presentation for the farm show is

Storm Damaged Trees—Now what???? Presented by John Ball and Craig Brown. Featured topics include

- ⇒ Why trees fall apart
- ⇒ Repairing the damage—can we save it?
- ⇒ Pruning storm damaged trees and standing them back up
- ⇒ Proper pruning to prevent future problems
- ⇒ What to plant for replacements

Hope to see you there!!!



Resource Conservation Speech Contest

WHO: Any Student Day County High School 9-12 grade

WHAT: Earn Money

THEME:

“Clean Green Alternative Energy”

WHERE: Day County USDA Service Center

WHEN: February 19th, 2009

OPPORTUNITY: State Champion \$1100

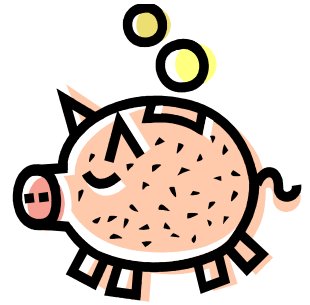
2nd Place \$750

3rd Place \$450

Local Winners are awarded and will represent Day County at the area contest. Two representatives from each area will be awarded and represent Coteau area with their presentation at the state contest.

Contact Cindy at 345-4661

Entry Blank and official rules.



Consider Options for Less Productive Soils By Ryan Forbes, Soil Conservationist

With the almost impossible wet harvest this fall behind you, you’re probably thinking ahead to next spring which is also looking wet. Before you order seed and prepare the ground this spring take a look at the less productive sites in your fields. In the past, have these spots typically drowned out year after year or simply grown weeds? There might be a more economical alternative for the area. Prices for fuel, seed, fertilizer, and herbicides are always on the rise. With the high cost of farming a producer needs to know exactly what they get out of the inputs they incorporate into their fields.

A money saving idea to manage these fixed inputs year after year would be to soil test. A soil test can give you a baseline on what the soil needs for nutrients. These tests can be used as a weapon to battle high fertilizer cost by applying the exact amount you need for crops to grow and save money for your bank account. Do you currently soil test regularly? I would be happy to answer any questions or interpret a soil test for you.

Another way to yield consistent income off these low productive areas is to take advantage of the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP). Did you know there are over 30 conservation practices that may be just what these less productive sites need? For example, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) allows producers to enroll wetland areas that have been cropped a minimum of 3 out of the last 10 years. With FWP, you may plant warm or cool season grasses, or a mixture of both, depending on the wetness of the site and the soil type. The grass seeding which includes seedbed preparation, drill rental, cost of seed, and weed control are cost shared. The soil rental rate for FWP land can vary from \$60 to \$90 per acre for 10-15 years.

Another soil issue may be high salts. CCRP has a saline seep program that encourages producers to plant salt tolerant grasses to manage the high salts and wetness. Or perhaps you are just looking for additional wildlife habitat with trees and grasses. CCRP also has programs to fit this resource concern as well.

These are just a few alternatives to increase your bottom line and improve your soil management. Please give the office a call to discuss your unique situation and alternatives.

Trees and Shelterbelts....Providing Protection???

During the height of these winter storms, the effectiveness of the damaged shelterbelts is evident. They are noticeably less successful protecting farmsteads, feedlots, and roads from drifting snow and blowing winds.

Open areas of the damaged sites should be evaluated to determine the best option in re-establishing the shelterbelt. Distribution of snow is dependent on various designs of a windbreak; dense lower levels cause snow to drift deeply with in the edge of the rows, and tall open trees allow snow to drift evenly over fields. Trees or shelterbelts planted with the windward row closer than 200 feet from the area to be protected can cause snow to pile up around buildings, roads, or feedlots.

Added benefits of shelterbelts include fuel cost savings of up to 35 percent, protection of farmsteads from soil erosion, protection of gardens and ornamental plantings, cover and food for birds and other types of wildlife, production of fruit for home use, reduction of noise from roads, and beautification of farmstead and countryside.

Additional options for tree plantings include single or multi row windbreaks, located at proper intervals across a field. Windbreaks reduce the velocity of crosswinds to a distance of as much as 20 times the height of the trees. Other items to consider when deciding on the profits of field windbreaks include increased crop yields, retention of snow on the field, reduction of damage to crop seedlings, reduction of crop loss due to lodging of small grains, reduction of moisture loss through evaporation, provide food and cover for wildlife, and beautify the countryside.

If you are interested in completing a tree planting this spring or would like additional information regarding tree plantings, shelterbelt renovations, and cost share options stop in the USDA Ag Center or call the District office at 345-4661 ext. 3 as soon as possible so we can assist you with your tree planting needs. Day County Conservation District is presently taking orders for the spring 2009 planting season. Remember the best time to



plant a tree was yesterday, and the next best time is tomorrow.



Little Change in Area Lake Levels by Dennis Skadsen

Water levels of two of Day County's largest lakes have changed little from 2007. Fall readings by the South Dakota DENR for Bitter and Waubay Lakes show water levels within a half foot of what they were the fall of 2007.

Bitter Lake's fall elevation of 1793.9 is 0.8 feet less than the fall 2007 measurement of 1794.7. This lake hit its all time record elevation of 1795.9 during the spring of 2002 and was at 1793.3 in September of 2006.

Waubay Lake is currently at 1800.57, a half foot higher than fall 2007 when the lake measured at 1800.00. Waubay Lake's elevation has risen the last two years. The lake was at its highest the summer of 1999 when the elevation measured 1804.00.

A snowy March and April brought 41 inches of snow, providing enough surface runoff to keep both Pickerel and Enemy Swim Lake's outlets flowing for much of the spring and early summer months. 7.5 inches of rain received in September and October brought the year's total precipitation to 23.35 inches. Outlet discharges from the upper lakes this fall and winter coupled with what appears to be a normal to above normal snowfall will probably result in higher spring lake elevations for both Waubay and Bitter Lakes. This is the first time in several years that Enemy Swim Lake has had outlet flows during the late fall and early winter months.

Weather data is compiled from information collected at the Waubay National Wildlife Refuge located on Waubay Lake. The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources measure lake levels annually in the spring and

Scholarship Opportunity

Day County Conservation District is proud to announce the SDACDE Karst Memorial scholarship of \$300 to any high school seniors attending vocational or college agricultural courses. Application forms and information can be obtained from the District Office, your high school guidance counselor or by emailing cindy.zenk@sd.nacdnet.net Applications are due to Brookings Conservation District by March 31, 2009. SDACE will be awarding 4 \$300 scholarships this year.





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Save the Mailman's back! Go Green!
Email your address to
cindy.zenk@sd.nacdnet.net

All programs and services of the district are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, disability, age, or political preference.

What are your Needs or Interests?

The Day County Conservation District Board would like to know what you want or need that the District could provide as a service.....

- No-till drill availability (more than one drill)
- No-till corn planter
- More educational meetings regarding_____?
- Grass Drill
- Chemical Weed control applicator
- Provide Drill operator along with Drill
- Site prep for tree sites
- Deer repellent application

Here are a few ideas some producers have mentioned. **ARE you interested in these or others? Please take the time to think about what you would utilize if the service was provided.**

Let Cindy or one of the board members know.

Energy Reduction_____

In today's world of increasing energy costs anything we do to save energy is important. Using trees to moderate our South Dakota climate is one way to save energy. There are definitely other options to reduce energy expenses.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed four energy tools designed to increase energy awareness in agriculture and to help farmers and ranchers identify where they can reduce their energy costs. The results generated by these tools are estimates based on NRCS models and are illustrative of the magnitude of savings. The energy tools can be found at <http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov/> . Energy estimators are available on tillage, nitrogen, irrigation and animal housing. Additional energy tools including fertilizer estimators are located http://attra.ncat.org/energy_calculators.html

See Inside for Tree Order Form!!
Call, Fax, or Email your order TODAY!!!
Do Not Delay!!
Be ready when Spring Arrives!!
605-345-4661