

# Cass County Soil Conservation District

## Conservation News

Summer 2017

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### 2017 Tree Planting Effort

The 2017 Tree Planting Effort was blessed with help from Mother Nature to begin the season. With an unprecedented lack of rain days to delay planting, we were successful in planting over **180,000** linear feet of tree rows in Cass County. Of these, **85%** had weed barrier fabric applied. Trees were planted under a mix of programs including EQIP and CWPI, as well as the producer paying the full cost of installation. We were fortunate to have a great crew of seasonal employees this season, with Dan Iwen and Barry Rupprecht returning for their 13th season and Adam Breske finishing his second. If you were unable to get a tree planting done in 2017, but are interested in putting conservation on the



ground, stop by the office today to get plans drawn up. Depending on the project, cost-share may be available. The **Cass Windbreak Planting Initiative (CWPI)** will be available again next year for field windbreaks, wildlife and riparian plantings.

### Tree of the Quarter

**Cottonwood** (*Populus deltoides*) is the largest and fastest growing native tree in North Dakota. Common along riparian areas and wet areas, the Cottonwood is a stately and iconic tree of the prairie. Narrow and upright when young, the branches spread with age to form a graceful crown. The branches have an alternate bud arrangement, and produce bright green, 3-5 inch leaves. In the autumn, the leaves turn a golden yellow. Cottonwoods reproduce by light, airy cotton-like seeds that drift on the breeze, and can cause masses of seeds to accu-



mulate on window screens. Siouland Cottonwood, and other cultivars of the Cottonwood, do not produce seed. However the life span of the cultivars is much less than of the native tree. Cottonwoods can live to an old age, and some of the very oldest specimens are over 100 years old. Whether planted as a future shade tree or in a tree belt, the Cottonwood is a beautiful tree. When young, they require regular moisture. Cottonwood trees are available from the Tree Store as both conservation grade and tall stock seedlings.

### District Staff

Jeff Miller—Operations Coordinator  
Tony Peterson—District Technician  
Eric Dahl—319 Watershed Coordinator  
Amy Cole—District Clerk  
Ashley Fisk—Urban Conservationist

### NRCS Staff

Josh Monson—District Conservationist  
Matt Shappell—Soil Conservationist  
Lucas Schmiesing—Soil Conservationist  
Matt Waclawik—Wetlands Specialist  
Blake Johnson—Agriculture Engineer

### District Supervisors

Terry Hoffmann—Wheatland  
Brad Kellerman—West Fargo  
Curt Knutson—Page  
Brooks Whitmore—Page  
Warren Solberg—Horace



### Supervisor Memorial Forest

A memorial tree planting was completed in the spring of 2010 in the southern portion of the Brewer Lake Arboretum. The planting serves as a memorial of the retired and current supervisors of the Cass County Soil Conservation District from 1946 to present. The initial planting consisted of American Linden trees. Each tree is identified with a concrete sign stating the name and period of time that supervisor was in office for the District and the community from which they were from. Also planted were 4 rows of trees consisting of Scotch Pine and Flame Willow on the western border to protect the area from wind and snow. The Memorial Forest was dedicated in the spring of 2011.

In 2015, it was determined that the survival rate of the American Lindens was very poor. The decision was made to remove the dead trees and re-plant. In the autumn of that year, the District tilled up the rows and

laid 4 new rows of fabric. In the spring of 2016, alternate rows of Scotch Pine and Bur Oak were planted in three rows, and wire cages placed around them to protect them from animal depredation. In the 4th row Hardy Apricot, Seaberry, Honeysuckle and Skunkbrush Sumac were planted as a living snow fence.

After a full growing season, the trees are doing well. Both species have put on a good amount of new growth and are thriving in their protective cages. The Memorial Forest, as well as the Arboretum, are open to the public year round.



### Upcoming Events

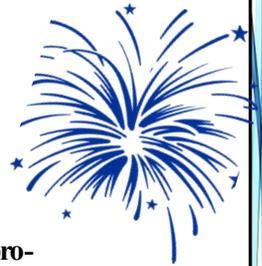
- July 19th- **Board Meeting:** Fargo Field Office
- August 16th- **Board Meeting:** Brewer Lake
- September 13-15th- **Big Iron:** RRVF
- September 29th- **Eco Ed:** Brewer Lake

### Conservation Quote of the Quarter:

*“Conservation means development as much as it does protection. I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.” Theodore Roosevelt*

## *Have you tried cover crops yet?*

**By Josh Monson**



Are you growing an early maturing crop that will be harvested by September? If so, why don't you give cover crops a try? There can be so many benefits to adding cover crops into your farming operation such as **erosion reduction, increasing soil organic matter, weed suppression, promoting biological nitrogen fixation, using up additional moisture, and reduction of compaction.**

Producers have often mentioned how mellow the soil was when planting directly into cover crop residue, compared to other fields that have been worked. Remember those high wind events we had this spring? How many of you saw that valuable top soil, along with nutrients, leave your fields? If we leave the residue from the previous year's cash crop/ cover crop we not only keep the soil in place, but save significantly on fuel and tractor wear and tear by not working the soil. Some of the keystones of good soil health are keeping a living root in the soil as long as possible, not disturbing the soil through tillage, keep the soil covered with residue, utilizing cover crops, and crop diversity. Do you have saline spots in your fields that make it difficult to recover input costs with a low bushel harvest? There are a few key things that will help to rebuild these soils: **Keep the soil covered and allow the rainfall to slowly move the salts further down into the soil profile, use cover crops to transpire water rather than evaporation, and reduced or no-till planting.**

**If you are interested in cover crops, contact us for a quote on seeding. Our 15' No-Till Great Plains drill is ready to roll to get those cover crops working on your land.**

### *Palmer Amaranth*



A weed that has been in a lot of the ag news lately, and for good reason, is Palmer Amaranth. This aggressive, fast-growing member of the Pigweed family has caused havoc for producers in the southern half of country in recent years, and has been slowly marching north. A tall, erect weed growing 6'-8' feet, and occasionally reaching over 10', Palmer Amaranth is a summer annual that can greatly reduce yield on cash crops. A native to the desert Southwest, it is adapted to intense heat and low, unpredictable rainfall. In natural stands in Arizona, biomass has been measured to exceed 2.2 tons per acre within 4 weeks of emergence. This rapid growth greatly exceeds that of common waterhemp and red root pigweed. Furthermore, stalk thickness can reach 2"-3". Each mature female plant can produce 200-900 thousand seeds, allowing the plant to rapidly take over an area. Because of this, Palmer Amaranth can be a huge deterrent to crop yield, as well as causing a major headache for harvesting equipment. It has developed herbicide resistance, and will readily regrow after chopping, making the complete removal of the weed the only way to eliminate the threat. North Dakota producers need to remain vigilant in monitoring their fields, and report any suspected Amaranth to the county Weed Department.

**STEWARDSHIP FOR TODAY & TOMORROW**

All programs and services of the Cass County Soil Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or handicap. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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