Tree of the Quarter: **Redoiser Dogwood (Cornus sericea)** is an open, multi-stemmed shrub, growing up to 10’ tall and 12” at the crown. The bark is a dark red color, adding a splash of color to the otherwise stark winter landscape. Dogwood is adaptable to a wide variety of soils, but does best in a moist to wet loams. It is a great conservation shrub, as it provides dense cover for a variety of wildlife species, and works well as a snow catch and windbreak. Dogwood spreads via lower prostrate stems, growing and spreading quickly. Leaves are dark green, changing to a lovely purple color in the fall. If interested in planting Redosier Dogwood, conservation grade bare root trees can be ordered through the SCD Tree Store.

### 2015 Achievement Winner

Richard and Karen Faught, of Amenia, have been chosen as the 2015 Achievement Award winners. Richard started his tenure on the Board of the Cass County SCD in 1991, following his father, Roy Faught, who retired after 30 years on the Board. Richard has represented Cass County in various aspects of conservation throughout the state and nation. He has been Chairman of the Cass County Soil Conservation District, Director of the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, and represented the state at different levels in the National Association Conservation Districts. He has also been very active with RC & D. He is a very avid conservationist and has many stories he can tell about soil, crops and water. While actively farming, Richard experimented in various innovative farming practices, such as strip-tilling and an early Agway system. Even after retiring, he agreed to return to the Board of the SCD on an interim basis during the search for a new board member. Congratulations Richard and Karen!
The District worked closely with our partners NRCS and FSA in setting up CRP, EQIP, and CSP contracts that involved either tree plantings or grass plantings. A few customers were able to utilize the cost-share program with the Outdoor Heritage Fund. We would like to thank all the cooperators in the county for giving the District the opportunity to apply conservation to their land. The District assisted these cooperators in planting 228,000 LF of trees and installed 205,000 LF of weed barrier. Almost 55,000 trees were planted in Cass County in 2015.

Our Eco-Ed outdoor educational program was held at Brewer Lake. 143 students from Central Cass School and Oak Grove Lutheran School enjoyed the beautiful weather while rotating through the six stations: Water Quality, Woodlands, Prairie, Wetlands, Geology, and Soils. The Fargo Audubon Chapter instructed the students in basic birding techniques.

Maple River Watershed Project Phase II (Buffalo Creek) is open for sign-up and we are continuously accepting cost-share applications for management practices in the Buffalo Creek Watershed. Practices include livestock management, cover crop, grass and tree establishment, septic system renovations, and more. The Buffalo Creek Watershed Project is off to a good start and several producers have been signing up and showing interest in the project. Other new developments include a large scale no-till demonstration farm located near Gardner, and a cover crop demonstration plot near Embden. These demo plots are sponsored by the 319 Watershed Project and the Cass County SCD. We will be holding field tours again at both sites in 2016 and hope to see you there!

The Urban Conservation program has been expanding this year. We took on a few great projects throughout our community and held several community educational workshops including the construction of rain barrels and building compost tumblers. Many appearances were made throughout summer including the Fargo Police Picnic, Midwest Kidfest, and the 4th grade Water Festival.

In celebration of Arbor Day and Earth Week, the District, with its many community partners including Fargo Forestry, Fargo Park District, and River Keepers, hosted two community events. The “Plant it For the Planet” was held at the Red River Zoo. The “Reforest the Red” event allowed community residents to participate in tree planting along the Red River to enhance the riparian forest. Both events were well attended and are planned again for 2016.

In March, the District held the annual Ladies Ag Night at St. Leo’s Church in Casselton. The event featured Kelsey Hoffmann, and Julie Garden-Robinson, both from NDSU Extension. Ladies Ag Night is a special event to show appreciation for all the ladies that are involved with agriculture in Cass County.

The District participated in the Ag in the Classroom program which was held at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds. This event educates approximately 2000 Cass County 4th graders on various agriculture and conservation practices.

We had a booth at the Home and Garden Show at the Fargo Dome. During this event we get a chance to meet new people and tell them about the many services the District has to offer.

We had a booth at the Big Iron Farm Show. Big Iron gives us a great opportunity to discuss soil conservation with the producers that stop by the booth. During the show we also displayed our tree planting equipment at our shop, which is located on the Red River Valley Fairgrounds.

The District was featured on AgWeek TV in June. They filmed the machine planting process for trees, and also a discussion on the importance and benefits of planting trees. An article about the tree planting program also appeared in the June 12th edition of the Farmer’s Forum.

All in all, it was a very productive and busy year. We look forward to working with producers and organizations to help Cass County continue to make strides in conservation!

“While the farmer holds title to the land, actually, it belongs to all of the people because civilization itself rests upon the soil.” Thomas Jefferson
Spring FSA Reminders
If your bank account information has changed, please let the NRCS office know. Incorrect information will delay your payments.

If you are adding or losing land, please contact the FSA and NRCS office so we can update our records.

If you have a new contract, please do not start any practices prior to the contract being funded.

Prior to installation of any practices that are currently in a contract, please contact the NRCS Field Office staff to make sure the design is complete.

If you have any program questions or would like more information on programs available through the NRCS office, please do not hesitate to contact us.

General CRP Signup
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up 49 began Dec. 1 and runs through Feb. 26. CRP is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land.

Producers that are accepted in the sign-up can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15 years).

Producers also are encouraged to look into CRP’s other enrollment opportunities offered on a continuous, non-competitive, sign-up basis and that often provides additional financial assistance. If you are interested in offering land into the Conservation Reserve Program, please contact the FSA Office.

Conservation Quote of the Quarter:
“A cloak of loose, soft material, held to the earth’s hard surface by gravity, is all that lies between life and lifelessness.”

Wallace H. Fuller

Scholarship Program
$1000.00 scholarship available for high school students going into Natural Resource Management!! The District is excited to be able to offer this scholarship as a way to encourage students to consider a Natural Resource Management career.

CCSCD is accepting scholarship applications until July 1, 2016. The District is encouraging high school seniors from Cass County, ND to apply for the scholarship if they plan to attend a North Dakota accredited college in the fall of 2016. The scholarship is intended for students going into Natural Resource Management, Conservation or other related fields of study.

Students can download an application on the District website.

Upcoming Events

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 18th</td>
<td><strong>Martin Luther King Day</strong>: Office Closed</td>
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<td>January 19th</td>
<td><strong>Board Meeting</strong>: Fargo Field Office</td>
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<td>February 15th</td>
<td><strong>President’s Day</strong>: Office Closed</td>
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<td>February 16th</td>
<td><strong>Board Meeting</strong>: Fargo Field Office</td>
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<td>February 26-29th</td>
<td><strong>Home and Garden Show</strong>: Fargodome</td>
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<td>March 1-4th</td>
<td><strong>RRVF</strong></td>
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<td>March 16th</td>
<td><strong>Board Meeting</strong>: Fargo Field Office</td>
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<td>March 10th</td>
<td><strong>Ladies Ag Night</strong>: St. Leo’s Church, Casselton ND</td>
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Board of Supervisors News:

Brooks Whitmore, Page, was reappointed to his second term by the Board to serve for the year 2016. Warren Solberg, Horace, was appointed to serve on the Board for 2016. He is a fourth generation farmer on his family’s homestead. He has been married to his wife, Mara, for over 32 years and have three adult children; Brandon, Britta and Bjorn. Although they retired from production agriculture in 2010, they still raise farm animals and manage other farm interests. In addition, Warren works full time in Dining Services at Concordia College. After graduating from Fargo South, he attended NDSU for one year and graduated from Moorhead Area Technical Institute, as a certified diesel mechanic. Warren has served on numerous Church and Township Boards, as well as the Farmers Union, where he served as County President. Having a farmstead located in the growth area of Fargo, he would like to utilize his time on the Board to focus on this area of conservation and land development. He believes that it is important to strive towards the betterment of the community for future generations.

NRCS News:

Brent Gustafson, District Conservationist for the Fargo Field Office, accepted the position of Area Resource Conservationist at the Area Office in Jamestown. Brent was the DC in Fargo for 5 years.

During the search for a new DC, the Fargo Field Office will have an Acting District Conservationist. Amanda Brandt, Valley City Field Office, served as Acting for the month of November, and Ryan Haspel, Wahpeton Field Office, will be serving for the winter.

Matt Shappell joined the Fargo Field Office as a Soil Conservationist in October of 2015. He previously worked as a Soil Conservation Technician in the Moorhead Field Office, and prior to that he worked with Ducks Unlimited as a Conservation Programs Biologist.

Urban Conservation:

We have had the opportunity to work on some really great projects this past field season. In particular, we were very excited to work with the YMCA on 42nd Ave in south Fargo. Twenty children, who are enrolled at the Y’s Early Learning Center, assisted us at our “Dig Day”. Together, we were able to install a rain garden along with a xeriscape in the Playscape area. In addition to the environmental benefits of these projects, the children are able to learn about pollinators and native plants.

We also launched the addition of bale and pallet gardens into our Urban program. The simplicity and minimal space requirement for these special gardens proved to make them very popular. If you’re interested in learning more about the bale and pallet gardens, check out our website. We also sell the kits to make your own, and will be hosting a free bale and pallet gardening class through the Fargo and West Fargo Park Districts in early May. For more information on the class, please contact Ashley at Ashley.Fisk@nd.nacdnet.net or 701.282.2157 x3.

Our urban conservation cost-share program is currently accepting applications for projects in 2016. Rain gardens, xeriscaping, rain barrels, compost tumblers, pervious pavers, bio-swales, and pollinator plantings are just a few of the many urban conservation practices that are covered under the program. Applications are accepted through April 2016. For more information, check out our website www.cassced.org or contact Ashley.
**Tree Planting in 2016?**

Ground preparation is the most critical element in tree planting success. If possible, the ground should be worked the fall **PRIOR** to planting. If that isn’t possible, spring tillage can suffice. Till the ground to a moderate depth up to 8”, and do not plant crops in the area where the trees will be planted. In the heavier soils of the RRV, it is beneficial to work the ground a few times prior to planting, as the clods will be reduced and will aid in drying out the ground.

Prior to installing fabric, you can continue to till or mow around the planted trees, as laying fabric with dense weeds is difficult and the trees won’t have a high rate of survival. We do not recommend fertilizer on new plantings, as it may burn up the trees.

If you have fabric on trees planted in the past, early spring is a great time to check for girdling. As the trees grow, their girth expands and may grow into the fabric. A simple X cut with a knife will allow the tree to grow unhindered.

Planting and maintaining trees is an endeavor that rewards hard work. Careful minding of the trees allows for a higher growth and survival rate. Thankfully, all the hard work pays off, not only now, but into the future, when these beautiful prairie sentinels are growing and benefiting our landscape.

**Grazing into Winter**

Cattle operations in Cass County are seeing the benefit of cover crop grazing into the winter. Cover crop forage mixes can be planted following small grain harvest or prevent plant acres, with the ensuing biomass utilized for late fall to early winter grazing. With the use of portable windbreak panels, producers can distribute their cattle on cropland acres by providing thermal protection from the elements. Benefits of grazing cattle on cropland acres include wide distribution of manure without the cost of handling it, water quality improvements, and the reduction of supplemental winter feeding. For more information on cost-sharing options to make this a reality on your operation, contact us today!

**Now Hiring!**

We are taking applications for a seasonal tree planter / fabric applicator. Job will run May-July, with 40+ hour weeks. If you enjoy working outside, putting conservation on the ground, please call the office to apply!
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. 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). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Would you like to receive the newsletter or other information in your email? Email amy.cole@nd.nacdnet.net to be put on the list!