



Hamlin Conservation District
P.O. Box 165
Hayti, South Dakota 57241



CONSERVATION COMMENTS

Hamlin County Conservation District Newsletter

P.O. Box 165 · Hayti, SD 57241
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The mission of the Hamlin County Conservation District is to assist our county residents in protecting and conserving our natural resources through financial, technical, and educational means.

Friends of Conservation Award

New in 2023, this award was presented to **Tom Dressen**, of Bryant, at our Annual Appreciation Dinner. Tom's interest in conservation and "giving back" is commendable.

He is a community gardener, on his own acreage, sharing the produce with area senior citizens and gardeners with a crop failure. People are able to help themselves to the produce. In growing a large garden, Tom soon realized how hard it is to give away 100 squash in Bryant!

Tom utilized various programs to plant trees beginning in 2003; then in 2005, 2008, 2014, and 2016; thus creating a wildlife paradise. Tom's grandkids "had the opportunity" to pull weeds around the base of the new trees and he would listen to them complain about doing so.

Tom has brought students from native Minnesota to South Dakota, out of the urban sprawl, to experience hunting waterfowl, deer and pheasants for many years. Fifteen kids, ages 13 to 18, all had the rush of shooting a deer, and most were able to kill one. Some came back more than one year! This past year, a fourteen-year-old from Bryant, shot his first deer with a bow and the previous year his thirteen-year old sister did the same. These kids who would have never had the chance to experience such joys of the land, if Tom hadn't provided the opportunity. This year, Tom's first grandson, from the Sioux Falls area, shot a buck!

Tom stated that the best part of this story is "the wife and I get to watch the smiles on kids faces after they have taken a deer or a pheasant."

Ever cheerful, positive and sharing, Tom is very deserving of this award.



District Board of Supervisors

Jared Namken, Chairman
James Anderson, Vice Chairman
Larry Brusse, Supervisor
Dorene Lemme, Supervisor
Danny Limmer, Supervisor
Eli Little, Advisor
Leonard Saathoff, Advisor

District Manager

Peggy Loomis

NRCS Employees

Kelsey Ramerth, District Conservationist
Abby Blanchard, Soil Conservationist
Patty Heermann, Civil Engineer Technician
Candace Prins, Soil Conservationist

2024 DISTRICT BOARD

Meeting Schedule

April 9 - 7:00 PM

June 11 - 7:00 PM

August 6 - 7:00 PM

October 8 - 1:00 PM

December 6 - 1:00 PM

Public is welcome to attend.

Board Advisory Position Changes

Burton Tesch has been on the Conservation District Board for many years. He began in 1999 as a supervisor, and held that position until he stepped down in 2014. He then became an Advisor in March 2018.

Burton has been a great asset to this board, as his passion for conservation has no limits. He always has great ideas of what the future should look like and how conservation can serve its purpose. After twenty years of representing the Hamlin Conservation District Board, Burton felt it was time to hand the opportunity to serve over to another conscientious producer.

Eli Little was appointed by Chairman Namken, as an Advisor to the Board. His interests and value in farming are similar to Burton's. Eli has the Board's confidence he will be a good fit for the position.

We are thankful to Burton for all of his years of service and dedication. Burton was presented with an award of appreciation at our recent Annual Appreciation Dinner.

The Hamlin Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer.

Patty Heermann is new to the Hayti NRCS office, as the Civil Engineer Technician. However, she is not new to NRCS. Patty started with the agency in November 2019, in the Clear Lake office, as a Soil Conservation Technician.

Prior to that, she worked as a Park Manager at Lake Poinsett Recreation Area. She has a Park Management degree from SDSU.

Patty is a retired, 20 year veteran of South Dakota National Guard, as Military Police. *We thank her for her service!*

She lives near Lake Poinsett and is very happy to join the Hayti office.



The Green Glacier in South Dakota

When folks think of a green glacier, an iceberg-like vision comes to mind. But in SD, the green glacier is a different type of beast. Those talking about the green glacier are actually talking about trees – eastern redcedar to be exact. Over the past few decades, eastern redcedar trees have been making their way north. Their march north is slow, almost unnoticeable (hence the ‘green glacier’). The cedar trees have slowly infiltrated the grasslands and have made their way from Texas north to Nebraska (and all the states between). They have even begun taking over our pastures and rangelands in many places of SD as well.

(To see how the landscape has changed, visit the Landscape Explorer at: www.landscapeexplorer.org)

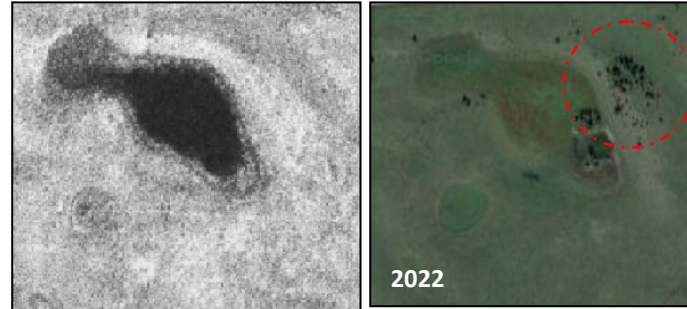
If you look back a few decades, the landscape looked much different. Grasslands (that hadn’t been plowed under) were just that – grass. Now, many grasslands have been overtaken by trees. Many think that one, maybe two, or three trees aren’t bad. Heck – they provide some shade for the cows, and “habitat” for the wildlife. **But for every 1% increase in tree cover, there is a 1% reduction in forage production.** As trees increase in size and number, they continually reduce the forage availability of a pasture and reduce stocking rates. Trees also use more water than the grassland vegetation around them. Dense stands of trees can actually intercept *all* the precipitation and return it back to the atmosphere – which reduces groundwater infiltration and reduce stream flows. (To see how much forage has been lost to trees, visit wlfw.org/yieldgap).

Grasslands evolved with three major disturbances, grazing, fire, and climate (aka drought). Grazing animals (think – bison, elk, antelope, deer, etc) roamed the prairies, eating the vegetation then recycling the nutrients to maintain healthy plant life. Fires, sparked by lightning or lit by indigenous peoples, helped keep woody plants in check. Streams, creeks, and rivers were also allowed to flood naturally, which kept certain species out of the wetter areas as well. As Europeans settled the vast prairies, these natural processes were unknowingly altered. Gone were the herds of grazing animals. Creeks were dammed to provide water for livestock. Fires halted to reduce impacts to crops and structures.

The future could look bleak, but there is hope on the horizon! Many areas of South Dakota have *not* been overtaken by trees. Steps should be taken to keep it that way though! Monitor grasslands for evidence of encroaching trees. Consider monitoring areas that are adjacent to parent trees (the seed producing ones). Seeds can be spread up to 200 yards away from a parent tree, so monitor those areas most intensely. If seedlings are found, get rid of ‘em! Small trees can easily be dug up or pulled out. Cedar or juniper trees will not survive as long as ALL of the vegetation is removed. Mowing close to the ground can be a viable option for small trees.

For land that has larger trees, mechanical removal can be an option. Shearing or using other means of removal will help reduce some of the impacts of the trees. But for every large tree there are many smaller trees beneath the grass canopy. Consider removal through a multi-pronged approach, including mechanical and prescribed fire. For more information on managing the green glacier, talk with your local NRCS office!

Written by Emily Rohrer
NRCS State Rangeland Management Specialist



Above are screenshots from Landscape Explorer. The left is imagery from the 1950s, the right is imagery from 2022. Notice the trees that have encroached into the grassland in the top right-hand corner.



2023 District Accomplishments

Our District planted 50 acres of trees for farmstead, feedlot, field windbreaks and wildlife habitat.

Since 1945, our district has planted 6,248 acres of trees. A total tree count of 27,811,448 have been added to Hamlin County through our tree planting program.

Laid tree fabric on 25 miles of trees and shrubs for eighteen producers.

Provided tree cleaning services by mowing 8 acres, four times a season.

Drill Rental Services = 793 acres.

Land Roller Services = 7,568 acres.

Sold \$50,547 in hand plant tree orders.

The Hamlin Conservation District administers two funding agreement opportunities for the S.D. Association District Employees. One is in collaboration with NRCS, which totals \$245,440 in funding and another \$317,240 as a match.

Involved in Arbor Day Essay Contests in three area schools, as well as the Big Sioux Water Festival, the SD Wildlife Conservation Camp, the SD State Fair and the Winter Farm Show.

Tree Planting Grants

Hamlin Conservation continues to offer cost share for tree plantings. You could receive up to 40% of the full project expense for tree planting and fabric application. This funding can be utilized immediately and continues into the Spring of 2024.

We have seen increasing interest in planting or replacing shelterbelts in our county. Many of these belts are past the forty year mark and are no longer serving their purpose of good wind or snow protection. Shelterbelts will lose their effectiveness due to age, neglect, storm damage, and disease. The cost to the landowners is often prohibitive. Hamlin Conservation District is able to provide landowners with a cost share option to enable them to plant new rows, or entirely new belts. The new seedlings will be planted in the Spring of 2024.

As with any grants awarded to the district through the State of South Dakota, the cost share will be available to landowners/operators who are not eligible for any other funding through government programs. Cost share is not available for “Farmstead only” plantings. All grants approved are obligated on a first come, first served basis, to those who qualify.



TREE PLANTING SERVICES

HAND PLANTS

Deciduous Bare Root - \$3.00 each
Conifer Bare Root - \$3.00 each
Conifer Plugs - \$3.25 each

TREE FABRIC

All sites - \$0.85 per linear ft

REPLANTS

Bare root - \$1.85 each (from previous year)

CREW PLANTING

Crew to hand plant - \$8 per tree

CULTIVATED (MACHINE)

All Tree & Shrubs—\$0.53 per linear ft.

ROTARY TILLING

\$100 per hour for first hour
\$80 per hour thereafter

TREE SITE WEED CONTROL

TREE FABRIC

6' x 500' per roll - \$225
3' x 300'=\$65

ROTARY MOWING

\$100 per hour for first hour
\$80 per hour thereafter

TREE TUBES

4' & 5' tree tubes \$4.50; Oak Stakes \$2.50; Fiberglass Stakes \$6

RENTAL EQUIPMENT

John Deere 15' No-Till Drill

Great Plains 15' Grass Drill

-\$150 minimum charge

-\$14.00 per acre

45' Rite Way Land Rollers (2)

·Minimum DAILY charge of \$100

·\$4.00 per acre

-Contact Lenny Saathoff for all your rental needs:

A big thank you to our 2023 Customers and our crew for another successful year. It is because of you, that we continue to put conservation on the ground.