

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPRING 2016 NEWSLETTER

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NPCD PHOTO CONTESTANT WINS NATIONAL COMPETITION



'The Promise of Spring' - Daniel O'Leary
National Winner—Youth Division

Daniel O'Leary, a sophomore at Wheeling Catholic Central High School in Ohio County, won First Place in the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Conservation Photo Contest—Youth Division.

The contest began in June 2015 at the District level. Daniel's three photo submissions placed first, second, and third in the District, and second and third in the State competition. His photos were then submitted into the national competition where 'The Promise of Spring' won first place.

The NACD conservation photo contest is open to the general public for adult and youth. The contest is a creative approach to promoting conservation. This year's submissions are due by June 3, 2016. For more information or to enter the contest contact Veronica Gibson at 304/238-1231.



Spring Starts Early For Just A Few

By Mark Fitzsimmons, NPCD Supervisor—Marshall County



When your neighbors down the lane hear you just planted tomatoes, peppers, and other garden vegetables, two things come to mind. One, its early April, is this really the effect of global warming? Or two, have our friends finely lost their minds? Yes, it's true a few northern panhandle residents are now checking soil temperatures, hooking up drip lines and jumping feet first into planting mode with high hopes of continuing their growing season through December and closing out 2016 with some great cool season vegetables.

What's the answer? A seasonal high tunnel system used to extend the growing season of vegetables and other specialty crops well into the Christmas season. With the increasing need for fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables, a few Ohio Valley residents have answered the call with high hopes of producing fresh produce for school cafeterias, neighborhood restaurants and private homes.

This spring you might just find fresh lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and onions a few weeks earlier at your local farmers market. Continued on Page 2



NPCD's new High Tunnel

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Spring starts early continued....

Hopefully, your children and grandchildren will soon have that same positive experience with their school cafeteria's lunch program.

Learn more about high tunnels by speaking with your local conservation district supervisors and NRCS personnel. Also, you might want to stop in at the Northern Panhandle Conservation District Office at One Ballpark Drive, McMechen, WV and check out our newly constructed high tunnel. Our goal for this high tunnel is education, as well as providing produce for some of our local soup kitchens.

For the past few years, with help from the John Marshall High School Horticulture program, the Conservation District has partnered with two of our local elementary schools learning vegetable crop production. Plans are to continue this partnership starting earlier this spring, with a plant care curriculum and working later into the fall with harvesting procedures, while providing fresh vegetables for their school cafeterias.

Please join us for an educational open house at the new high tunnel on Thursday, April 28th at 6:30 p.m., where there is plenty of light at the end of our tunnel!

Remember, tomorrow's conservation is achieved thru today's education.

New Practices Coming Soon!

The Northern Panhandle Conservation District (NPCD) is happy to announce the addition of two new practices to the Agriculture Enhancement Program (AgEP). These two practices are Urban Agriculture and Heavy-Use Protection Area.

Urban Agriculture will provide assistance to urban and rural landowners that are interested in agricultural practices. Urban Agriculture will provide soil and watershed protection by storm water management and soil erosion reduction, and encourage locally grown foods.

Specific projects available will be composting bins, low tunnels, straw mulch, raised beds, rain barrels, soil, and cold frames.

Heavy-Use Protection Area is the stabilization of areas frequently being used by livestock and/or vehicles by reducing soil erosion. Improve and protect water quality and/or improve livestock health by providing an armored pathway in high traffic areas.

This practice can be used for livestock watering areas, livestock trail and walkways, loading and unloading areas, and post-harvest processing areas.

Applications for AgEP will be available June 1, 2016 through June 24, 2016 at the NPCD office.



Agriculture Enhancement Programs

Spring has arrived! As you start thinking of all the things on your to-do list, remember that we have the Agricultural Enhancement Program (AgEP). AgEP is administered by the Northern Panhandle Conservation District (NPCD) with assistance from the West Virginia Conservation Agency. AgEP supports the agriculture community through a series of cost-share practices which landowners can participate in to reduce soil erosion, provide alternative water for their livestock, and improve productivity of their lands.

The NPCD AgEP is offering the following practices: Fencing for grazing and stream

protection; Water systems (spring development); Lime, Invasive Species Control; Fertilizer; Forage and Frost Reseeding; Heavy-Use Protection Areas, and Urban Agriculture.



Applications for AgEP will be available June 1, 2016 through June 24, 2016. For more information about the program or to obtain an application please contact the Northern Panhandle Conservation District office at 304/238-1231.

"Water is the driver of Nature." - Leonardo da Vinci

Best Six Dollars You Ever Spent

Have you ever wondered what your livestock is getting out of that bale of hay you're feeding? Forage quality is an important aspect of everyday agriculture that we don't put enough emphasis on. Because of this, the Northern Panhandle Conservation District is now offering a cost-share program on Forage Testing. The basic test covers Dry Matter, Crude Protein, ADF, NDF, Ca, Mg, P, K, S, Dairy & Beef Energy, and RFV. The cost of the test is \$18 and the NPCD will cost share two-thirds of that cost, so you, the cooperator, are only paying \$6. You can submit up to 5 tests per year for cost sharing.



The conservation district has a forage probe to take the tests or you can schedule with the soil tester to have them

taken when you have a soil testing visit. We encourage everyone to take part in this new program, it will prove to be the best six dollars you ever spent!

FREE Soil Testing

The Northern Panhandle Conservation District is providing residents in Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, and Marshall county free soil testing for lawns, gardens, orchards, hay fields, and pastures. Rich, nutrient dense soil is crucial for healthy plants and grass. The soil test results will display a graph with your soil's potassium, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, and pH levels. The lab results will also provide suggestions on how to correct your soil should it be lacking any necessary components. Call the NPCD office to sign up today at 304/238-1231.



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SERVICES

Emergency Watershed Protection
Technical Assistance for Conservation Practices
Conservation Education Programs and Contests
Forage Sampling

EQUIPMENT RENTAL

Aerator	\$35 per day
Lime Spreaders	\$35 per day
Denco Sprayer	\$25 per day
Weed Wiper	\$35 per day
No-till Drill	\$50 minimum
	\$ 8 per acre (+15 acres)

Remember to thoroughly clean and grease the equipment before returning it to the District Office. Help us to keep the equipment in good shape for years to come.

*Programs and activities offered by the Northern Panhandle Conservation District are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status.

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