



PROGRESS REPORT OF ACTIVITIES USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center

2014

7472 Stoll Road
E. Lansing, MI 48823

517/641-6300

<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/mipmc/>

TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ROSE LAKE PMC

Teaching and learning opportunities in natural resources conservation, staff changes, and the continued integration of PMC plant releases and technology development with on-the-land conservation were the major activities of Rose Lake PMC in 2014.

A survey of MI-NRCS field staff revealed their need for information and experience in native prairie establishment. Among Earth Team Volunteer Tom Topham's personal contacts was a neighbor with an abandoned pasture and a desire to establish native prairie. Rose Lake PMC staff brought together this need for information and experience with the opportunity of an abandoned pasture to establish the Jerome Center for Native Plant Establishment. (The Jerome family provided the pasture.)

Sixty-four combinations of these treatments for establishing prairie in an old pasture are being trialed at the Jerome Center:

- fall vs. spring seeding
- drill vs. broadcast and cultipack
- flower seeding followed by grass seeding
- grass followed by flower
- simultaneous flower and grass
- temporary cover vs. clear seeding
- mowing vs. no mowing



Jim Marshall, NRCS Biologist, reviews plot layout with field staff at Jerome Center for Native Plant Establishment.

Biologists Jim Marshall (NRCS) and Jim Hazelman (US Fish & Wildlife Service) facilitated a summer outdoor learning experience for Field Office and Conservation District Staff as the first of many anticipated teaching and learning opportunities at the Jerome Center for Native Plant Establishment. One participant stated "The chance to go outside was great! All the outside activities were very useful, informative and entertaining." Other participants concurred.

Activities at the Jerome Center for Native Plant Establishment accord with a national programmatic change to increase efforts in technology development, demonstrations,

Helping People Help the Land

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

and training. Ongoing technology development at Rose Lake PMC relates to reed canarygrass suppression; vegetative barriers for odor, snow, and soil erosion control; cover crops and soil health; and forest tree establishment. Other summer teaching and learning opportunities offered at or by Rose Lake PMC in 2014 are represented in the following photos.



NRCS Soil Scientist Matt Bromley discusses characteristics of soil health through the profile.



Elder Hank Bailey, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, discusses significance of sweetgrass with PMC Staff.



200 Shiawassee County Agriscience students and FFA members learn about soil health from PMC-established cover crop plots.



PMC Staff assist tribal members with sweetgrass planting.



PMC Agronomist John Durling presents soil health demonstration at Earth Day event at Michigan State Capitol, Lansing, MI.

STAFFING CHANGES

John Leif started his USDA-NRCS career as agronomist (and subsequently manager) of Rose Lake PMC in 2003. Prior to Rose Lake PMC, he worked in the agrichemical industry. In July 2014 he returned to industry, this time as field agronomy manager with a liquid fertilizer company. Stable leadership and an experiential knowledge of the larger agricultural context in which PMC releases and technologies are being deployed were among the strengths that John Leif brought to the Center.



John Leif. Rose Lake PMC Agronomist (2003-04) and Manager (2004-2014).

John Leif's legacy at the Center continues through the only full-time employee that he ever hired — John Durling. John Durling is now Rose Lake PMC Manager. In addition to a decade as PMC Agronomist,

Dr. Durling brings to the position a wealth of experience in agronomy and resource conservation. He has held appointments as Director of Farming Systems Research with the Michigan Agricultural Stewardship Association and as a Sustainable Farming Systems Specialist at Michigan State University and has considerable family farming and agribusiness experience.



John Durling. Rose Lake PMC Agronomist (2004-2014) and Manager (2014 - present).

Biological Sciences Technician Sergio Pérez and Office Automation Assistant Elaine Gerona, with tenures of 17 and 12 years at Rose Lake, respectively, continue to provide vital support to PMC efforts.

