

Finding Solutions Today
For a Secure Tomorrow

Spectrum

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Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District



Metro Area Treasure Hunt Hits Omaha

The second edition of an Omaha area family outing and treasure hunt starts now. Called **GO! Play Adventure**, this free program gets families outside to play and visit local parks and other areas in search of treasure: treasure in the form of posts for crayon rubbings.

And once families collect rubbings from 20 of the 25 posts, treasure may be awarded as well in the form of prizes.

"This is not just a treasure hunt," says **Christine Jacobsen** of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (NRD). "This is a fabulous way to get families outside, playing and experiencing adventures. Our guidebooks feature 25 locations all over the metro area to encourage you to visit new parks and other facilities. Playing and enjoying outside in some new locations are all part of the treasure."

Sponsored by MORE Nature, the Papio NRD, and the Junior League of Omaha, GO! Play Adventure is in its second year in the metro area. The new guidebooks give clues where to find the posts at 25 locations, and each page has a place to make a rubbing from the post graphic. Sites featured in the guidebook include Omaha favorites such as the Joslyn Art Museum Sculpture

Garden, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, Fontenelle Forest, Elmwood Park, BounceU, Mahoney State Park and Vala's Pumpkin Patch. Some of the lesser known, but interesting spots to visit include Allwine Prairie Preserve, Heron Haven Wetland, DeSoto Bend, Haworth Park and OPPD's arboretum.

Books are available for pick up at several locations throughout town including Saddlebrook and all other City of Omaha Community Centers, Joslyn Art Gallery, Fontenelle Forest, Hitchcock Nature Center, Mahoney State Park and BounceU. Books can also be printed online at www.MOREnature.info. Families have one

year to complete 20 of the 25 rubbings, and must also complete two sites of their own to qualify for prizes. The Papio NRD at Chalco Hills will accept the completed books.

The GO! Play Adventure program was started by MOREnature and the Junior League of Omaha in response to the prevalence of electronics which have taken the place of playing outside for many children. Lack of physical activity can lead to obesity and a number of other health issues. Recent research has found that children who play outside for an average of 90 minutes per day have less risk of heart trouble later in life.

Playing outside not only makes children healthier, it provides a number of other benefits to a child's growth and development. Through physical play, young children discover what their bodies can do. As their physical skills such as running and climbing improve, children gain confidence and are motivated to try new things. Playing outdoors also gives children a chance to interact with others and develop healthy social skills including cooperation and leadership; and unstructured play fosters creativity and imagination.

Besides a place to discover and play, all sites have one aspect in common this year: they feature conservation efforts by local groups. The post graphics also promote the conservation aspect as they all feature native Nebraska plants and animals. These graphics were drawn as part of an art project by students at Omaha Christian Academy.

As families experience sites around the metro area, the visitors are encouraged to blog or post about their GO! Play Adventures on Facebook.

Get your book
Visit Sites
Register for prizes



NRD helps with Thompson Creek Buyout in LaVista

The Papio NRD has pledged to help with a voluntary floodplain buyout of 24 houses in the City of La Vista. Located along Thompson Creek east of 84th Street, these structures abut the banks of this creek which has suffered degradation over the years. The channel has been deepened and widened by erosion and the banks have become unstable. Public utilities and various outbuildings are being threatened and ultimately the principal dwelling structures could suffer.

Through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the City of La Vista applied for a Hazard Mitigation Grant for this \$2.7 million project. The NRD is helping La Vista provide the local match funding in the amount of \$340,155 payable over three years.

The project calls for acquiring 24 of the existing homes so that there will be continuous access to at least one side of Thompson Creek. The location of the creek in the backyards of existing lots has made it impossible for public agencies to perform maintenance on the creek. Once these structures have been demolished in this voluntary program, measures will be installed along the creek to protect the 34 houses remaining on the south side of Thompson Creek.

"The Thompson Creek basin has been a long-term challenge for the City of La Vista, but the voluntary acquisition of these properties will enable us to begin a long-term solution," said **La Vista Mayor Douglas Kindig**. "The City of La Vista is grateful for NRD's assistance in obtaining this grant and its participation in the local share of this project, which I believe is the perfect example of inter-governmental cooperation."



Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Levee Receives Federal funds

One of the largest flood control projects that the District has helped coordinate got a major boost from Congress this year.

The federal American Recovery Reinvestment Act has fast-forwarded about \$13 million in funds to accelerate this \$38 million project found along the Platte River in Western Sarpy and eastern Saunders Counties. More than \$25 million has been allocated by the Federal government through the Corps of Engineers from 2004 - 2011 to finish this 10-year project which calls for building and strengthening levees to protect local farmland and residences. It will also protect the surrounding infrastructure, such as roads including Hwy. 6 and I-80, BNSF Railroad, Lincoln and Omaha well fields and pipelines and Nebraska National Guard Camp, near Ashland

The next two years construction includes:
Western Sarpy Levee Segments 2 and 3
Clear Creek Levee Segments 4 and 5
Platte and Elkhorn River Bank Stabilization
Conservation measures including the East Bank Wet Meadow, Vencil's Island; West Bank Levee Setback and Chute

The Conservation Measures to be included in this project will focus on stream channel mitigation on Vencil's Island and wet meadows mitigation on the Sarpy side.

The Papio NRD has worked closely with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources along with the Lower Platte North and Lower Platte South NRDs to fund and build this needed project. Now that the federal money has been granted, crews are working hard on these flood control measures for the safety of the area.



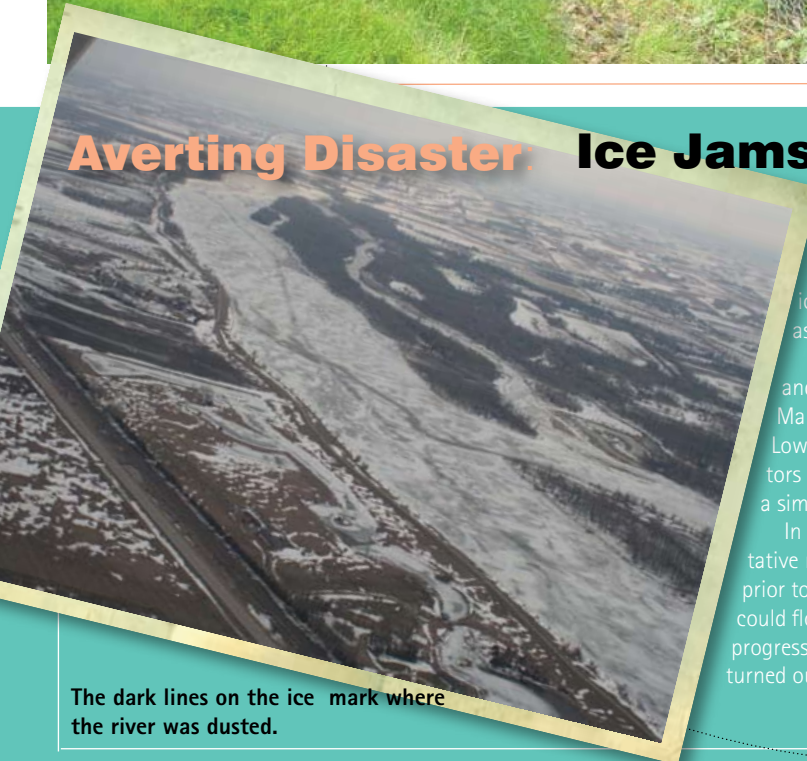
Averting Disaster: Ice Jams on Platte Melted Away

Flooding along the Platte River in Sarpy County was narrowly missed this year, thanks in part to the close monitoring and emergency preparedness by the NRD and other local agencies.

Record breaking snowfall and severe cold temperatures set the stage for possible ice jam induced flooding along the lower Platte and Elkhorn Rivers in Eastern Nebraska as snow melting and ice break-up occurred.

Damaging flooding has occurred in this corridor occasionally from ice jams. Plans and daily inspections were made through the NRD, along with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Sarpy and Douglas County Emergency Management Agencies, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Monitors measured the ice daily, and the conditions were constantly watched. The ice reached a similar thickness in 1993 and 1997 when ice jam flooding occurred.

In February, ice dusting was used to help melt narrow channels. Ice dusting is a preventative measure that uses small particles of coal slag to help melt and weaken the ice cover prior to breakup. The aerial dusting helped open up parts of the river where the blocks of ice could flow through; and while high stages of ice were reported for a time, ultimately the jams progressed downstream to the Missouri River without incident. The weather in early March turned out ideal for slowly weakening the ice, averting any major problems.



The dark lines on the ice mark where the river was dusted.

Projects Update



New Platte River Rec Opportunities

River Obstruction Removal: As part of the Platte River Corridor Alliance's commitment to the Platte River, Olsson Associates is surveying the concrete piers river obstructions near Two Rivers State Recreation Area for possible removal. The Papio NRD is one of the three NRDs and six agencies supporting the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance which works with people to protect the vitality of the Lower Platte River Corridor

The Water Quality Open golf tournament will once again be held at Quarry Oaks Golf Course near South Bend, NE. The date for this year's event is September 2nd, and festivities for the day are slated to begin at 10:30 a.m.. Please reserve this date on your calendar, and make plans to join us for a fun-filled day of learning and golf!

Platte River Landing, an NRD recreation site along the Platte River west of Valley, will be expanded thanks to a recent purchase of ten acres next to the property. The property was bought from a local SID at an auction, and will be used to expand the needed public recreational opportunities along the Platte River. Currently, Platte River Landing is a day use park with a boat ramp and picnic facilities. A recreation master plan will be developed shortly.



Pigeon/Jones Dam Site #15: Progress Starting

A 228-acre lake is one step closer to reality in Dakota County, as land acquisition will start in July. The dam design is now being finalized with construction slated to start in the fall. This lake, Pigeon/Jones Creek Site # 15, is part of a comprehensive watershed plan to provide flood control, erosion control and grade stabilization benefits in Dakota County. The flood control benefits will be realized on thousands of acres of irrigated cropland in the bottomlands.

While providing flood control, this project will also provide recreation benefits such as a 228 acre public lake, fishing, bike trails, and equestrian trails situated in the middle of a large public recreation area.

This Dam Site is a **\$14+ Million** Cooperative Project. **funds anticipated:**

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| NE Resources Development Fund | \$6,482,667 |
| Dakota County | \$300,000 |
| Papio NRD | \$3,805,000 |
| NE Game & Parks Commission | \$1,212,375 |
| NE Dept. of Environmental Quality | \$130,000 |
| Nebraska Environmental Trust | \$3,000,000 |

Sarpy County Whitted Creek Project Finished

The next time you are golfing at Tregaron Golf Course near Bellevue, impress your partners with a little hybrid knowledge of the area. Bio-Engineering hybrid, that is.

A creek running near the golf course has been restored using a natural channel design. Whitted Creek, a tributary to the West Branch Papio Creek near 25th and Capehart Road is one of the first in the area to use a bio-engineering hybrid method to rehabilitate the severely eroded streambed and banks. By stabilizing the creek banks and the streambed, the adjacent flood control levee is protected and the overall environmental health of the creek is improved.

Sections of this creek run through Tregaron, so be looking for signs.

According to **Martin Cleveland**, NRD Construction Engineer, the project was designed with a mindset of looking at the whole creek condition rather than taking a "band-aid" fix-it approach.

The project's total cost is estimated at \$1.48 million. Funding comes from the NRD, as well as \$300,000 grants each from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the NE Department of Environmental Quality.

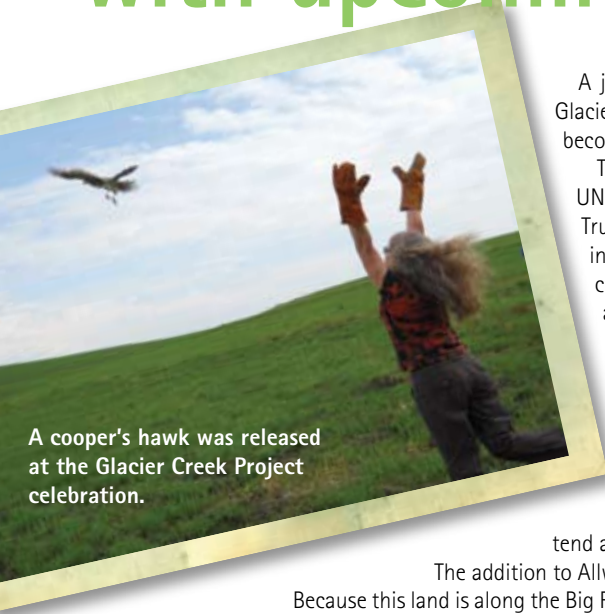


Tree shelters – the stakes shown in this photo protect the shrubs and trees planted along the streambed.

Omaha's Allwine Prairie

Growing, Celebrating

with upcoming addition



A cooper's hawk was released at the Glacier Creek Project celebration.

A joint venture located in northwest Omaha, the Glacier Creek Project, is expanding a restored prairie to become a fascinating resource for the community.

Thanks to a cooperative project between the NRD, UNO and funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Allwine Prairie Preserve has been expanded in size, and will be the site of wetlands and stream channel mitigation, as well as a potential education and research center.

UNO owns Allwine, and through the NRD and NE Environmental Trust funds, more than 80 acres adjacent to the prairie were purchased from a developer in December for the Glacier Creek Project effort.

More than 50 local residents, officials and agency staff members gather recently to attend a celebration of this addition.

The addition to Allwine benefits both the Papio NRD and Allwine.

Because this land is along the Big Papio Creek, it is the perfect spot to be used by the NRD for a wetlands and stream channel mitigation bank. Wetland and stream channel improvements plans are currently under design, and construction will start later this year. Credits from the bank will be available to mitigate wetland as well as stream stream impacts resulting from construction projects.

Allwine Prairie also benefits from this Glacier Creek Project:

- It expands the existing preserve by extending it to the Big Papillion Creek.
- The project connects the tallgrass prairie and riparian habitat that would otherwise be part of a residential development; the site will be protected from isolation from encroaching development.
- It improves the environmental quality and educational value of the site by diversifying the habitat of the whole ecosystem to a large wetland-lowland prairie habitat complex

Allwine Prairie Preserve serves as an outdoor classroom and research facility for students and faculty at UNO, Creighton University, and local schools. It is a 160 acre reestablished grassland research area; more than 250 species of woody and herbaceous plants have been identified at the Preserve. Over 109 species of birds, 12 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 24 species of mammals also have been observed there. It is open to the public on the 3rd Saturday every month from June - October or upon request. Please call 554-2234 for more information.



Allwine is a GO! Play Adventure site



Prescribed Burn At Chalco Hills Just Like Nature Intends

Prairie fires are helpful to prairies. They keep the prairie from becoming a forest and invaded with other plant species, as they promote the renewal of the grasses.

That's why in April the NRD burned some of its prairies at Chalco Hills Rec Area. With the help from the Springfield Volunteer Fire Department and the Gretna Fire Department, NRD park staff performed several prescribed burns at the park.

All burns were done safely and professionally by the participating organizations. There were many positive comments made by the public about how much the work was appreciated. The NRD park staff thanks the local fire departments and looks forward to the continuing relationship with those organizations.



NRD News People • Places



LEADERSHIP AWARD

The NRD outstanding Leadership award was presented to **Terry Schumacher** of the Papio NRD from the NE Land Improvement Contractor's Association. Terry is a Field Representative in the Blair office, and has served as the Project Manager for the Silver Creek Watershed project, as well as surveyed and designed conservation practices for farms in northeastern Nebraska. Terry was selected to receive this award from the hundreds of state-wide employees who work for Nebraska Natural Resources Districts. Thanks for your hard work, Terry. **Well Deserved!**



SAFETY AWARD

The Papio-Missouri River NRD has been designated as one of the Safest Companies in the Greater Omaha Area by the Greater Omaha Chapter of the National Safety Council. A thanks for these efforts goes to NRD Safety Coordinator **Jean Tait**, and safety committee members Terry Schumacher, Mike Bickley, Gerry Bowen, Heather Guthridge, Jolene Kohout, and Ryan Trapp. **Safety First.**

NEW STAFF

Bill Woehler has started as a water system operator for the Dakota County Rural System. Bill comes to the NRD's rural water system after working with South Sioux City as a service technician, and serving in the Marine Corps for 16 years. Flushing water lines, shown south of Dakota City, is part of the routine maintenance schedule for the Dakota County Water System which delivers high quality water through over 126 miles of pipeline. **Welcome!**



MEDIA AWARD

The NRD received a 2009 Award of Merit for Television Public Service Announcements from the NE Chapter/Public Relations Society of America. The group recognized our Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge TV Public Service Campaign encouraging metro area residents to enjoy our area trails. **Well Done.**

20 YEARS!

More than 1500 students participated in water education at WATER WORKS 2010, held in May at Schramm State Park. Sponsored by the NRD, MUD, UNL Extension and other agencies, Water Works has provided fun water education for twenty years for metro area students. **educate now for future conservation values**



The NRD's Heather Guthridge shows conservation and landscape uses at Water Works 2010.

STAFF RETIREMENT

Randy Hummel (left) recently retired from the Dakota County Rural Water System. THANKS for your 20 years of service as Water Superintendent, Randy! The Dakota County Rural Water System is under the umbrella of the Papio NRD. **Thanks, Randy.**



STATE NRD REC AREAS

The 23 Natural Resources Districts in Nebraska offer some neat recreation areas that aren't as well publicized. These hidden gems can be found in a new brochure with a map at www.papionrd.org or email papadmin@papionrd.org. **Have Fun!**



ON FACEBOOK

The NRD is on FACEBOOK. Search for Papio Missouri River NRD and become a fan. You can never have too many friends! GO! Play Adventure is on FACEBOOK as well. Search M.O.R.E Nature to find out news on GO!

Remember to blog about your GO! Play Adventures on Facebook as well!

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

The NRD works closely with the Federal USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. In fact, office buildings are often shared by the NRD and the NRCS to facilitate program coordination. **Neil Jensen** is the new District Conservationist for the NRCS at Omaha. As the newly appointed District Conservationist for the Papio-Missouri River NRD he will work closely with conservation issues. Jensen was the Resource Conservationist in the NRCS Washington County Field Office in Blair for the past twenty-two years. **Good times ahead.**



Making a Splash

DEMONSTRATION *Rain Garden* PLANNED AT *Chalco Hills Rec Area*

A rain garden northwest of the Natural Resources Center at Chalco Hills Recreation Area is now being constructed as a demonstration project for using stormwater runoff. Rather than letting the water from the roof and the parking lot trickle into Wehrspann Lake, the water will be captured and used to supplement native plants.

In this demonstration garden, amended soils will capture the runoff water, let it infiltrate and promote plant growth. It will be installed this summer.

Rain gardens are just one of many ways the Papio Creek Watershed Partnership is working with curbing stormwater runoff. The partnership is charged with addressing the water quality and flood prevention needs in the community. Other methods of keeping water clean include controlling construction site runoff and involving the public with education. Other rain gardens in the area are found at Omaha's Orchard Park and Millard West High School.

For more information on building your own raingarden and the Papio Creek Watershed Partnership, visit www.papiopartnership.org



Chalco Hills is a GO!
Play Adventure site



Jim Thompson, Chairman

John Winkler, General Manager

Emmett Egr, Information/Education Coordinator

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FIELD OFFICE LOCATIONS:

Washington County: 1245 Lincoln St.;
Blair, NE 68008; (402)426-4782

Burt County: 539 S. 13th,
Tekamah, NE 68061; (402) 374-1920

Thurston County: 106 S. Costello,
Walthill, NE 68067; (402)846-5655

Dakota County: for correspondence:
PO Box 480; Dakota City, NE, 68731;
For location: 1505 Broadway,
Dakota City, (402)494-4949

Sarpy/Douglas Counties: 8901 S. 154 St.;
Omaha, NE 68138 (402)896-0121

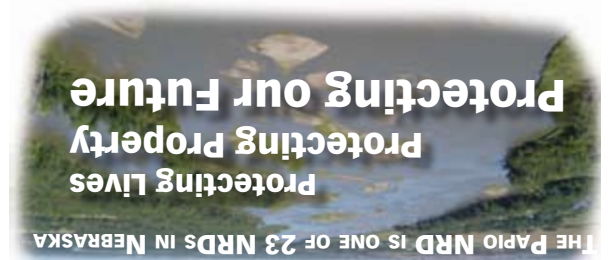
BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

JIM THOMPSON, CHAIRMAN

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
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| Scott Japp | David Klug |
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The NRD Board holds its monthly public meeting the second Thursday of the month at Chalco Hills Recreation Area, 7 PM. The NRD is an equal opportunity provider.

Spectrum writer/designer: Jennifer Knight, Little House Publications



Summer, 2010

Finding Solutions

8901 S. 154th St.
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**PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER
NATURAL
RESOURCES
DISTRICT**



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

