

**Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Report To  
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board  
April 13, 2017  
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



**USDA Offers Renewal Options for Expiring Conservation Stewardship Program Contracts**

*USDA's Largest Conservation Program Helps Producers Improve Health, Productivity of Working Lands*

Acting Deputy Agriculture Secretary Michael Young announced that a contract renewal sign-up is underway for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), USDA's largest working lands conservation program with more than 80 million acres enrolled.

Participants with existing CSP contracts that will expire on Dec. 31 can access the benefits of the recent program changes through an option to renew their contracts for an additional five years if they agree to adopt additional activities to achieve higher levels of conservation on their lands. Applications to renew expiring contracts are due by May 5.

Through CSP, agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, buffer strips, pollinator and beneficial insect habitat, and soil health building activities – all while maintaining active agricultural production on their land.

Benefits to producers can include:

- Improved cattle gains per acre;
- Increased crop yields;
- Decreased inputs;
- Wildlife population improvements; and
- Better resilience to weather extremes.

Producers interested in contract renewals or applying for CSP for the first time should visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp) or contact their local USDA service center to learn more.



## **NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) MEETS WITH LOCAL NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICTS (NRD) TO DISCUSS NATURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Craig Derickson, State Conservationist, hosted an April 5 meeting with the Papio-Missouri River NRD, the Lower Elkhorn NRD and the Lewis and Clark NRD at West Point. The purpose of the meeting was to have a dialog on current NRCS and NRD priorities and conservation activities.

Topics that were discussed included:

- Do our NRCS identified resource concerns for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) meet long-term goals and outcomes of the local NRD Boards?
- What conservation outcomes are NRCS and NRD trying to accomplish through our programs and personnel?
- Staffing challenges/Workload/Partnership Opportunities
- Communicating a clear and consistent message for Bazile NWQI and 319 funds.
- Ephemeral gully update and watershed management
- Update on Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Review of EQIP State Initiatives and how they fit in with NRD priorities
- Discuss NRD's Integrated Management Plan (IMP) in regards to water quality and quantity. May give some insight on developing priorities for NRCS programs.
- NE Sediment and Erosion Control Act – discuss updates in compliance and prioritizing funds for ephemeral erosion.



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