

BLAIR FIELD OFFICE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



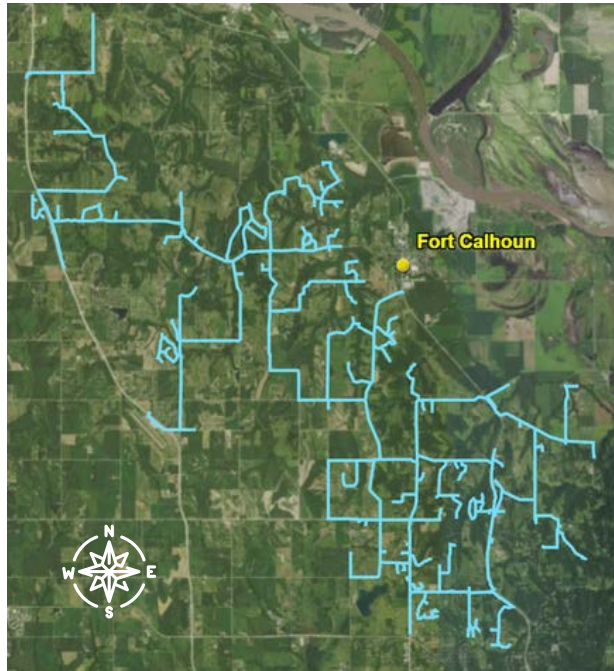
Second Edition - February 2021

WASHINGTON COUNTY RURAL WATER

The Papio-Missouri River NRD (PMRNRD) operates and maintains the Washington County Rural Water System (WCRW) to provide customers with a safe and reliable water supply. Each year, WCRW purchases over 170 million gallons of treated water from the Metropolitan Utilities District and the City of Blair. This system supplies more than 1,000 households with clean water. Lakeland and the City of Fort Calhoun are also supplied by this system.

Water purchased from the Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) flows through the pump station (pictured below) to supply the first half of the WCRW system. The second half of the system is supplied by water from the City of Blair at the Blair water tower.

These two sources allow for supplementation between each other should one system fail. This back-up adds an extra



The 75-mile long Washington County Rural Water System runs all the way from the Northern part of Douglas county up to Blair.

layer of protection for the reliable supply of water to residents of the rural water system.

The WCRW staff works out of the Blair Field Office and has two full-time employees (pictured below). Kyle Winn, Rural Water Superintendent, and Bruce Sill, Water Supply Operator, work on the hydrants, mains, service lines, meters and pressure reducing valves throughout the 75-mile long system.

There are three rural water systems that the Papio-Missouri River NRD maintains and operates within the district. They are separately located and operated in Washington, Thurston and Dakota counties.

These reliable and safe water systems are another way the PMRNRD protects and preserves Nebraska's natural resources.



Washington County Rural Water Staff. **Bruce Sill**, Water Supply Operator (left) **Kyle Winn**, Rural Water Superintendent (right)



The pump station is where water purchased from the Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) comes into the WCRW system.



Pipes inside the pump house are connected to three pumps which run on intervals. Each motor runs for 1 week at a time before rotating to the next.

Justin Novak, former Washington County Field Representative started as Project Manager on January 18th, 2021. He will now be managing all three Rural Water Systems in the PMRNRD. Congratulations Justin!!!!

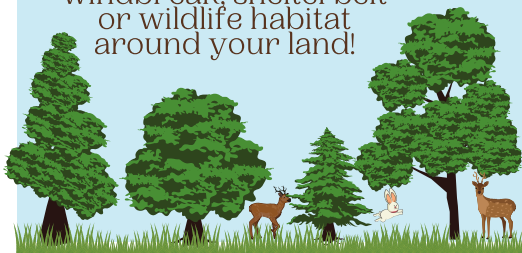
Field Notes



The sun peaking out to melt the early morning frost on this Washington County road.

Photo courtesy of Chuck Venditte

Don't forget to place tree orders before March 20th for a windbreak, shelterbelt or wildlife habitat around your land!



**CRP
GENERAL
SIGN UP
CLOSES
FEBRUARY
12TH, 2021**

Tribute-Terry's

A word from Terry Schumacher,
Land & Water Programs Coordinator

Crunch, crunch through the snow and then the sky erupts with the sound of rooster pheasants cackling and soaring past! The noise makes it hard to count the 40 to 50 birds busting out of the old cattle yard. This is a memory I have etched into my brain from 40 years ago as a boy hunting on my grandfather's farm near Elba, Ne.

This all seemed like a distant memory until a few weeks ago when I was lucky enough to be asked by a true conservationist, that I consider a friend, to visit his little haven for some pheasant hunting. It was a cloudy, calm afternoon with 2 inches of fresh snow- perfect! 5 hunters (of various ages and abilities), 3 dogs and crunch, crunch through snow we go! Then all the sudden that boy from 40 years ago gets to experience that rush, that joy from years gone by as the sky explodes with rooster and hen pheasants. How many? Too many! How many did you get? None, but what fun.

The message is simple from my friend, "If you build it, they will come!" This took place in Washington County. We hunted 5 different habitat areas that totaled about 20 acres and we kicked up 150 birds or so, too many to count! If this sounds like fun to you, we can work with you to create your little haven.

To provide feedback on the newsletter or to update your subscription, contact:
Kalani Fortina
(402) 426-4782 ext 110
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Celebrate Trees Grant Program

Applications Still Open For 2021 Spring Planting!

For over 20 years, the District has provided assistance to communities for tree planting in public use areas. Over 390 two-inch caliper trees were planted with the assistance of the program just last year alone. They were planted surrounding areas including: schools, libraries, public parks, baseball fields and even the historic Fort Atkinson campus. The resources these trees provide will be around for generations to come. Applications are open for 2021 spring planting! Applications for the replacement of diseased or dying trees are higher priority. The deadline for submitting applications is March 15th, 2021. Contact John Zaugg (402) 670-4336 with questions about eligibility or program information.

"I am honored to have joined an enthusiastic team of like-minded conservationists and I look forward to collaborating with producers and landowners in the years to come."

- Chuck Venditte,
NRCS Soil Conservationist Technician



Chuck Venditte, Blair Field Office NRCS Soil Conservationist Technician feels fortunate to have been hired in August of 2020. Chuck comes from nearly 15 years of environmental consulting and field work for the private sector. He earned his BS in Geography and AS in Wilderness Management. He is truly passionate about environmental stewardship. Chuck now resides on a small acreage near Fort Calhoun where he spends most of his free time.

DID YOU KNOW?

92% of land in Nebraska is used for farming, ranching and livestock operations.

That's a total of 45 million acres!

-Soil Health for Nebraska Wealth. The Nebraska Healthy Soils Task Force Report. 9 Dec 2020.

Darlene Hensley, Blair Field Office NRD Program Assistant, has worked for the District since 1981! She is an avid supporter of the NRD Tree Program, the Well Abandonment Program and the NRD Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. Darlene is a member of the Omaha Bee Club. She promotes the use of wildflowers and grasses that assist with the restoration of the bee population and increases the habitat for the Monarch Butterfly. Darlene lives on a small acreage by Irvington surrounded by many shrubs from the NRD Tree Program. Call Darlene at (402) 426-4782 ext. 101 for information about our programs or for free wildflower seed packets!