



BLAIR FIELD OFFICE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THIRD EDITION - MARCH 2021

WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Landowners who sign up for WHIP contracts have a choice between seeding pollinator mixes (left) or establishing native grasses for wildlife habitat (right). Photos courtesy of Darlene Hensley and Kalani Fortina.



Timothy and Kathy Welsh have 3 acres of WHIP enrolled in pollinator planting in Washington County. Photos courtesy of Kathy Welsh.

March is a great time to start laying out plans for Spring planting around your land. Have you ever considered planting a pollinator garden? What about a mixture of tall, native grasses for wildlife habitat?

The P-MRNRD provides cost-share assistance to landowners who qualify for the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP). Applicants must have an area between 2 and 20 acres to enroll in the program. Contracts are written for 5 or 10 year periods. The P-MRNRD provides \$150/acre the first year for establishment followed by an annual payment of \$50/acre after for maintenance.

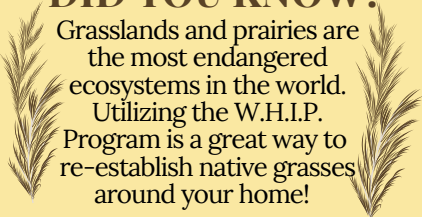
Miles of treated cropland result in 'food deserts' for bees and other pollinators. Providing pockets of wildflowers throughout our community not only adds beauty to the scenery, but also helps the declining population of pollinators.

Pollinators aren't the only ones who benefit from the WHIP Program. Seeding a few acres with native grasses provides nesting and roosting areas for wildlife! Many landowners who have WHIP contracts with well-established native grasses are surprised by how many pheasants, turkeys, deer and quail they see in their own backyard!

Landowners who complete their Spring WHIP seeding will receive their first payment on April 1st, 2021! To discuss a plan for your land, contact the office at (402) 426-4782.

DID YOU KNOW?

Grasslands and prairies are the most endangered ecosystems in the world. Utilizing the W.H.I.P. Program is a great way to re-establish native grasses around your home!



NEW P-MRNRD SEPTIC SYSTEM PROGRAM EASES FINANCIAL BURDEN ON HOMEOWNERS NEEDING SEPTIC SYSTEM INSTALLATIONS OR UPGRADES

Having a registered and fully functioning sewage treatment system for your home is important to keep contaminants out of surface water and our drinking water supply.

As part of the new 319 Papillion Creek Watershed incentives, landowners within the Papillion Creek Watershed are invited to apply for the new P-MRNRD Septic System program. The program provides cost-share assistance for the repair and replacement of dysfunctional septic systems or the installation of a new septic if there is currently no functioning system. This program is not eligible for areas of new development.

Cost-share is provided for 75% of the construction costs. For dysfunctional systems, the P-MRNRD will pay no more than \$5,000. For non-existent systems, the P-MRNRD cost-shares to a maximum of \$7,500.

"Interest in this new program has been very high and I'm more than happy to help and answer any questions for homeowners who are interested," said Kyle Madsen, 319 Watershed Coordinator. Contact Kyle at (402) 350-3695 if you are interested in learning more!

Meet Kyle, Your Watershed Coordinator!

Kyle Madsen, P-MRNRD Watershed Coordinator, brings 11 years of experience in Rural Conservation to the Blair Field Office. Kyle earned his BS in Natural Resource Management and Conservation Biology. He is passionate about finding opportunities where industry and stewardship meet!



"I'm truly excited to work with farmers and landowners in the interest of conservation and equitable compensation! I'm more than happy to talk about where conservation practices can work on your farm. I have maps and will travel!!!!"

MODIFICATIONS TO DISTRICT POLICY 17.37 AIM TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN SMALL FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER QUALITY STRUCTURES WITHIN PAPILLION CREEK WATERSHED

On February 11th, 2021, the P-MRNRD Board of Directors approved modifications to District Policy 17.37 - **Small Flood Control and Water Quality Structure Program**. Under the new modifications, landowners within the Papillion Creek Watershed are encouraged to apply for small flood control structures to be built on their land.

It is the hope of the P-MRNRD that new modifications to Policy 17.37 will encourage additional landowners to apply. This will create a broader range of flood control structures that also aid in improving water quality within the Papillion Creek Watershed.

If you would like more information on the Policy change or would like to apply for a Flood Control and Water Quality Structure on your land, contact Terry Schumacher, Land & Water Programs Coordinator at (402) 426-2415.

HAVE A STORY OR PHOTO YOU WOULD LIKE FEATURED?
CONTACT KALANI FORTINA:
Kalani.Fortina@usda.gov
(402) 426-4782 ext. 110

Tribute-Terry's

A word from Terry Schumacher,
Land & Water Programs Coordinator

Everyone probably knows about the herbicide, 'Roundup,' - or maybe you have been on a cattle round-up or perhaps you have 'rounded up' at the cash register. I would like to introduce you to Round OFF!

With the Pollinator Safety Corners, you can 'round off' those corners located at intersections of county roads. This helps with more efficient farming, provides safer intersections and creates pollinator habitat!

Wow! Three birds, one stone!

The program is intended to be very user friendly with enrollment of 1-3 acres. Money is available to help with establishment with an annual payment of \$250 per acre.

If you are lucky enough to be within the Papillion Creek 319 Watershed, you can receive another \$100 per acre incentive for a total of \$350 per acre annually. Can we say "no brainer?!"

Field Notes



By March, many Great-Horned Owl eggs in our area have hatched. If you notice the owls around your home hooting louder and more frequently, there could be a baby owlet in the nest!

Photo: A Great-Horned Owl perched near its nest in Bennington. Photo courtesy of Kalani Fortina.