

BLAIR FIELD OFFICE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

EIGHTH EDITION - AUGUST 2021

THE CONSERVATION CONVERSATION

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

What is EQIP?

EQIP is a conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which the NRD offers additional funding for. EQIP provides both financial and technical assistance to landowners to address issues such as: air/water quality, soil health, livestock operations and wildlife/pollinator habitat among others. These issues are known as 'resource concerns.' Through EQIP, these concerns are addressed while improving agricultural operations and easing the financial burden on the landowner.

What practices are available?

There are many different practices available depending on the resource concern being addressed. Practices popular in our District include: Cover Crops, High Tunnels, Brush Management, Wildlife Habitat, Fencing, Terraces and Livestock Pipelines. For a full list of practices, visit the NRCS website at [nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

How much funding is available in our District?

For the last three years, our District average for EQIP funding has been approximately \$900,000/year.

How do I apply?

Begin by contacting your local NRCS Field Office. For Washington, Douglas and Sarpy Counties, call (402) 426-4782. From there, an NRCS employee will work with you on a plan and application. Applications are ranked depending on resource concerns and District-wide funds available.

Solve the jumbles to identify common EQIP practices in our District!

1. NEECF

- Constructed barrier to control flow of animals.

2. MIDETNSE BASIN

- A basin constructed to capture, retain debris/organic run-off and allow it to settle.

3. RSUHB MANAGEMENT

- Management or removal of plants that are invasive or noxious. Designed to achieve desired plant community (composition, density, canopy, cover etc.) Also used to manage fuel loads and enhance wildlife habitat.

4. HIGH ETNULN

- An enclosed structure used to protect crops from wind, cold, sun and excessive rain. Also used to extend the growing season (pictured right).



5. RATEECE

- Earth embankment or combination ridge & channel constructed across a field slope to control erosion, manage run-off and capture sediment (shown above).

6. ANIRPIAR BUFFER

- Reduces transport of sediment into surface water, streams. Roots filter pathogens, chemicals & pesticides from surface water.

ANSWERS ON BOTTOM OF PAGE 2

Field note



Pollinator Safety Corners contracts that were seeded this Spring. Through this program, landowners are paid \$250/acre to remove row crops and plant a mix of short grasses and wildflowers. These corners provide adequate sight distance at rural intersections while also benefitting pollinators!

Tribute - Terry's

A Word from Terry Schumacher,
Land & Water Programs Coordinator



DOG DAYS!

As we roll into August, the Dog Days of summer are upon us. Before you know it, the kids will be heading back to school along with the teachers- much to my wife's chagrin. Your local seed salesperson will be having field days telling everyone about the big yields that are in your fields. They have the potential to be very good, hopefully everyone can avoid the white blight.

August is also County Fair time. The Washington County Fair is a great event that continues to grow. The NRD will have a booth at the fair. A perfect time to stop and check out what conservation opportunities might fit your needs.

Check out the field note on the Pollinator Safety Corners. In my travels around the rural areas of the NRD, I have noticed that some of these intersections are getting tough to see the traffic coming from the other direction. The annual payment is \$250 per acre and if you are in the Papio Creek 319 Watershed you can receive an additional incentive of a \$100 per acre for a total of \$350/acre annually. Note these are 5 year contracts.

FAREWELL & SAFE TRAVELS, BRUCE SILL!



Congratulations to Bruce Sill who is leaving us behind for the state of Wisconsin! Bruce has been a Washington County Rural Water Operator for over 2 years in the Blair Field Office. Before that, Bruce worked for the City of Fort Calhoun as a Water Operator for 20 years.

Bruce and his family have always been very involved in the community of Fort Calhoun.

Not only did he design and build the ball diamonds in Fort Calhoun, he also spent the next couple decades maintaining them! He remembers a time where he would set an alarm for 2am to move the sprinklers on the ballfields before they were able to install a sprinkler system.

Bruce, his wife and their two sons enjoy spending time outdoors- camping, fishing and exploring. They're looking forward to doing more of that in Wisconsin! From all of us at the office: Congratulations Bruce!!!!

Meet Jorden Smith, Your Rural Forester!



Hey y'all, here is a quick blurb about myself... Being born out in Utah and growing up in Wisconsin, I was exposed to a multitude of different ecosystems. From the sage flats of Utah to the hardwood forests of Wisconsin - the latter of those ecosystems playing a pivotal role in what I wanted to do later in life. Living within a household that was active in the outdoors and did everything from hunting to fishing to camping, I took every opportunity I was given to go out and explore the forest. I quickly fell in love with it, even at a young age. Fast forward about a decade and a half and I'm graduating from the University of Minnesota with an Urban Forestry degree, wondering where the next phase of my life and career will be at.

Shortly after graduating, I got hired on as a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Forester with the Nebraska Forest Service up in Hartington. After spending two years being a WUI Forester, I transitioned into becoming the Northeast Area Forester and was the leading forester in the Northeast corner of the state and very thoroughly enjoyed that role and that position. I was lucky enough to be presented with the opportunity to become the Papio-Missouri River Forester and focus a majority of my time improving and renovating the forests from South Sioux down to Blair. I can't be more eager to start helping out where I can! I am looking forward to getting to meet many of you and to help build strong, healthy forests!

To contact Jorden Smith about tree programs to benefit you, call (402) 278-8349.