

Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Blair Field Office Monthly Newsletter

Twelfth Edition - December 2021

Winter is a perfect time to plan for Spring tree planting, windbreak renovations, or general tree maintenance on your property. There are programs for cost-assistance through the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Forest Service!

Nebraska Forest Service Wildland Urban Interface Program (WUI)



Photo Courtesy: Nebraska Forest Service

The WUI program provides cost-share funding to landowners to create fuel breaks, fire breaks, remove hazardous fuels, reduce fire fuel loads, and reduce the overall risk of wildfire burning in woodlands. Hazardous fuel is any debris, deadfall, or overstocked trees that may be in your forest or around your home. Overstocked Eastern Red Cedar is the primary hazardous fuel in the Eastern part of Nebraska.

Removing hazardous fuels means to reduce the amount of vegetation which has built up to dangerous levels or change the arrangement of these fuels in the environment. This will reduce the probability of a catastrophic fire while maintaining, or restoring, a healthy and resilient forest and protecting communities.

Tools that are used to carry out the mechanical treatment of hazardous fuels range from hand tools such as chainsaws and rakes, to large machines such as bulldozers and woodchippers. Trees can be cut/piled/burned; chipped/mulched; or removed off-site for utilization of lumber, shavings, posts, etc. Cost-share can cover up to 75% for qualifying project work. Contact Jorden Smith, Papio NRD Forester, at (402)278-8349 for more information!

Conservation Tree Program Order Forms Available!

Through the Conservation Tree Program, landowners purchase bare-root tree or shrub seedlings from the NRD in bundles of 25 per species. Bundles cost \$24 each which makes the price of each tree less than a dollar after tax!

There are also options available for assistance planting the trees/shrubs. Call the Blair Office at (402) 426-4782 for more information or to request an order form!

"Celebrate Trees" Grant Application Period Open



A previous Celebrate Trees recipient. Applicants should plan to perform mulching, staking and watering to ensure a successful planting.

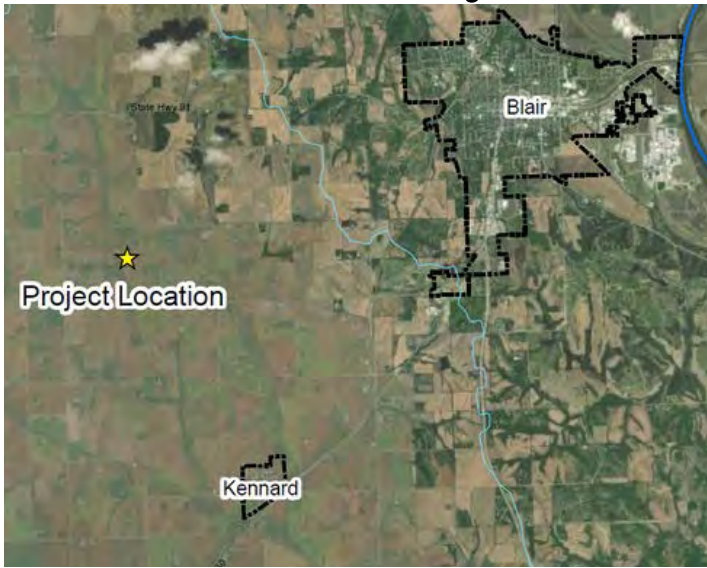
Applications are currently being accepted for the 2022 Celebrate Trees Grant Program! This grant encourages and assists communities with tree planting projects in public areas such as: parks, cemeteries, schools, etc. Each contract is awarded up to \$2,500 with a maximum of \$250/tree.

Applicants are funded using a ranking system that places higher emphasis on the replacement of diseased/damaged trees.

Applications are accepted until March 1st. Contact Kalani Fortina, (402)426-4782, for more information or to fill out an application!



Engineering Firm Selected for Washington County Small Flood Control Structure



On November 10th, 2021, the Papio-Missouri River NRD Board of Directors selected HDR Engineering Inc., to construct the Small Flood Control and Water Quality Structure Project within the 319 Papillion Creek Watershed. This project is located southwest of Blair in Washington County (see map).

"Projects like this are vital to the 319 Papillion Creek Watershed," said Kyle Madsen, Watershed Coordinator. "Our goal is to improve water quality throughout the Watershed. Whether it's through terraces, waterways, basins, or structures like this, there are funds available to landowners for implementing conservation!"

Tribute-Terry's

A Word from Terry Schumacher,
Land & Water Programs Coordinator

A few weeks ago, I was able to get out in the field to do some terrace survey with Kyle Madsen, 319 Watershed Coordinator. All the GPS units were being utilized by other technicians in the field, so I suggested we get out the rod and level (old school).

When we got to the field, I could see the look on Kyle's face of *how in the heck are we going to get anything done*, but I assured him I knew what I was doing. About that time, contractor Marty Shepard showed up to add his wisdom to the mix and get in a few laughs. Had to dust off a few cobwebs in the old noggin, but we got started. In a little over an hour, we had three terraces staked out! At the end of the day, it is about doing whatever it takes to get the job done.

This past year has been anything but normal, maybe this is the new normal, I hope that it has been good for you and your family and friends. Have a safe and joyful Holiday Season!



Darlene Hensley retires after 40 years with the NRD!

Darlene Hensley, Program Specialist in the Blair Field Office, is retiring after 40 years with the Papio-Missouri River NRD!

Darlene started with the NRD in 1981 in the Omaha office on 93rd and Maple. Her time at the NRD was spent in various positions from bookkeeping to clerical work until she started working with the conservation side of the NRD in 1992.

Her last day with the NRD is December 17th. Though our building is still closed to visitors, she would love a phone call to wish her a happy retirement! "My favorite part of this job," Darlene said, "has always been working with farmers. I'm a farm girl myself and that was a big reason why I wanted to work in Blair."

From everyone in the District: Thank you for the years of service and Happy Retirement, Darlene!!

