

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Written Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
March 10, 2022
Andy Bohnenkamp, District Conservationist**

NRCS Programs

CRP General signup 58 will end tomorrow March 11. As you might guess there are fewer new applications this year than in years past. CRP is a tough sell right now with commodity prices and just the overall volatility in the markets. Many of our applications are contracts set to expire this year and are simply renewing for another 10 years. We are currently in the process of approving EQIP applications for conservation projects. So far we are outpacing last year's funding with a total of \$610,398 in initial allocated funds from State, Area and local pools and we haven't even made it to the excess funds yet! This is really good news! I am optimistic we will have a great EQIP year in terms of funding projects.

Staffing

The Walthill Field Office is getting a new Soil Conservationist on approximately June 6th! Robyn Byl is a Pathways Student with our agency and she worked in the West Point Field Office the last 2 summers. She is looking forward to graduating from Iowa State with a degree in Agronomy this May and will transition from a Pathways student to a full-time Soil Conservationist with NRCS in Walthill. This will greatly help us fill a void there in Walthill with a fairly experienced new employee. I am officially no longer the Acting Missouri River Basin Coordinator/Central Region US Army Corps of Engineers Liaison. That detail ended effective February 10.

Covid-19 USDA – Office guidance

Currently all offices in the NRD, are operating at near 100% staffing capacity. We also received word that the mask mandate for all Federal office space has been lifted for offices that reside in a county with a low to medium covid transmission rate, which currently includes all counties within the NRD! We have not received official word on the date for all federal employees to return to work, it was originally scheduled for March 14, however the last spike in Covid paused that date. Also have not received word on an official date to unlock our office doors and open up fully to the public. We are currently receiving customers in the office by appointment only, however we are more than ready to turn the key and open up!

Respectfully,

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