

**Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Written Report To  
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board  
Thursday September 8, 2021  
Andy Bohnenkamp, District Conservationist**

My report for this month includes my State Conservationist, Rob Lawson's General Manager Report to the NRD GMs in his Manager's meeting on Tuesday August 30. I will also just briefly touch on what is going on in our NRD currently with overall NRCS operations. Please forgive my absence again this month, I have a DC meeting in Fremont today and my sons are playing High School Football tonight that I can't miss!

### **Drought Persists**

NRCS staff in Papio are keeping an eye on how the persistent drought conditions will affect federally funded contracts this fall as crops start to get harvested. Unless we start to get significant precipitation, terrace construction will likely be delayed on all soil conservation projects this fall through our EQIP program. NRCS staff will evaluate each project in the field for adequate moisture for compaction prior to start of construction. Cover crop and grass seedings will also need to be re-evaluated and possibly delayed as well. Our agency is currently working on guidance to build flexibility into our EQIP, and CSP contract modification process should the need arise to push practices to next year. Hopefully as summer winds its way down to fall we see a significant weather shift with it.

### **Staffing updates**

Last week I was given some great news to share. I am extremely happy to announce that NRCS is currently advertising for a Field Engineer Position located in the Blair Field Office! This position will fill a very large engineering assistance void left for approximately the last 8 years since our previous Engineer left. Obviously, we still need to get some good candidates for the position, but the fact that we now have this position on the radar and in the works is extremely positive. I want to especially thank John Winkler and Terry Schumacher for all their support and assistance in keeping the need for this position in the forefront to my NRCS leadership. This is just another great example of how valuable our partnership

with the NRD is in advancing the mission of getting conservation on the ground so I can't thank you enough!

Lastly, keep praying for this weather to break and give us the needed precipitation we all need, but especially our farmers and ranchers. Also want to extend the invitation to all board members, NRD staff and certainly General Manager Winkler to please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, comments, or ideas that pop-up, I am always happy to visit about how we can Help People Help the Land!

Respectfully Submitted

Andy Bohnenkamp  
P-MRNRD District Conservationist  
(402) 426-2625 Ext 102  
[Andrew.bohnenkamp@usda.gov](mailto:Andrew.bohnenkamp@usda.gov)

## Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

# NRCS Update

## Report to NRD General Managers



### State Technical Committee Meeting

The next State Technical Committee Meeting will be Thursday, Sept. 8, from 1 - 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Federal Building in Lincoln, Neb., located at 100 Centennial Mall North, in room 397 A&B, and virtually via MS Teams.

The meeting agenda and information about how to dial into the Teams meeting is available on the [Nebraska NRCS website](https://www.nebraska.nrcs.usda.gov), or by contacting Tami Nordman at (402) 437-4108 or [tami.nordman@usda.gov](mailto:tami.nordman@usda.gov).

### Nebraska Urban Agriculture Subcommittee

The Nebraska Urban Agriculture Subcommittee held its inaugural meeting on Aug. 26, 2022, in Lincoln. This subcommittee will work with the Nebraska State Technical Committee to provide input on how USDA programs and services can be tailored to urban and small-scale ag producers.



Members of the committee are made up of private citizens, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and state and federal agencies. This initial meeting provided the opportunity for members of the committee to get to know each other and learn more about what is happening across the state with urban and small-scale agriculture.

### Conservation Program Update

NRCS field staff are mainly ranking EQIP applications for wildfire assistance and writing CRP contracts as they close out fiscal year 2022.

### Conservation Easements

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) applications are accepted throughout the year. The next funding cycle cutoff is expected in November. ACEP funding is likely to increase over the next several years due to the recently passed Investment Reduction Act, which will increase funding for easement acquisition, stewardship, and monitoring. Staff are working to finalize easements on:

- 7 Emergency Watershed Protection Program - Floodplain Easement on 754 acres.
- 12 ACEP - Wetland Reserve Easements/Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership on 1,400 acres.
- 3 ACEP - Agricultural Land Easements - Grasslands of Special Significance on 18,222 acres.

### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Through CSP, NRCS helps producers improve their farm and ranch operations while implementing conservation practices that help ensure the sustainability of the entire operation.

Some benefits include:

- Increase in cattle gains per acre,
- Increase in crop yields,
- Increase in wildlife populations,
- Decrease in producer inputs, and,
- Greater resilience to impacts of weather extremes.

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[ne.nrcs.usda.gov/](https://ne.nrcs.usda.gov/)



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Nebraska • September 2022



#### Current Enrollment:

- 1,877 active contracts
- Approx. \$127 million in total obligations
- 3 million acres

#### Fiscal Year 2022:

- 66 renewal contracts
- 144 classic contracts (14% of applications)
- 14 Grassland Conservation Initiative contracts

CSP applications are accepted at anytime, but the application deadline for fiscal year 2023 funding will be announced soon. More information is available [HERE](#).

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides financial assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits. During fiscal year 2022 over \$25 million was obligated to over 930 contracts on over 400,000 acres.

NRCS Nebraska has obligated \$1.4 million for livestock deferment on impacted grazing lands through its disaster assistance for producers impacted by wildfire. The top contracted FY22 practices include:

- Livestock Watering Facilities, Fence and Pipeline
- Brush Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Cover Crops and Conservation Crop Rotation
- Sprinkler Irrigation System
- Terraces
- Irrigation Water Management

Applications are accepted at any time, but the application deadline for 2023 will be announced later this fall.

### Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Through RCPP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address. The Fiscal Year 23 National Funding Opportunity for Classic and Alternative Funding Arrangements is anticipated to be announced in January.

We have 5 active RCPP18 partner projects. Current Producer Enrollment:

- 57 Producer Contracts for Cover Crops

- \$1.2 million in total obligations
- Over 17,000 Acres
- Over \$136,000 Producer Payments

### Current Conservation Program Sign Ups:

- Sept. 22 - Deadline for partners to submit proposals through the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI).
- Sept. 22 - Deadline for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials program.
- Sept. 23 - Deadline for partners to submit Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership proposals. Applicants must submit electronic proposals to [Shawn McVey](#), easements program manager, (402) 437-4148.
- Oct. 10 - Deadline for accepting grant proposals through the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program.
- Oct. 11 - Deadline for partners to apply for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Classic program.

More information about these funding opportunities is available at [www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov), click on "Newsroom," then "News Releases."

### Watershed Programs Update

Watersheds impact every community, town, city, and farm. All watersheds are interconnected, creating a land-water system that conveys water to its final destination—above ground or even underground. NRCS Watershed Programs provides technical and financial assistance to local government agencies, tribal organizations and other eligible sponsors, to help communities implement conservation that addresses watershed resource concerns.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed in November 2021, provided \$918 million for NRCS watershed programs. NRCS is funding projects in rounds, and will continue to review and fund requests as funds are available. [View the funded projects.](#)



## Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO)

WFPO provides technical and financial assistance to entities of State and local governments and Tribes (project sponsors) for planning and installing watershed projects.

Authorized Project Purposes include:

- Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)
- Watershed Protection
- Public Recreation
- Public Fish and Wildlife
- Agricultural Water Management
- Municipal and Industrial Water Supply
- Water Quality Management
- Watershed Structure Rehabilitation

There are 33 current Nebraska WFPO projects:

- Preliminary Investigation Feasibility Report – 12 projects, 9 NRDs, 19 counties, over 2.3 million acres.
- Supplemental Plan – 1 project in 1 NRD, 3 counties, on over 245,000 acres.
- New Planning – 18 projects in 11 NRDs, 30 counties, on over 3 million acres.
- Design – 11 measures in 2 NRDs in 2 counties.
- Construction – 3 measures in 3 NRDs in 3 counties.

## Watershed Rehabilitation Program (REHAB)

This program provides technical and financial assistance to rehabilitate dams constructed through NRCS Watershed Programs. This program extends the service life of dams to meet applicable safety and performance standards or decommission the dams, so they longer pose a threat to life and property.

- Assessments – 9 structures in 4 NRDs in 4 counties.
- There are 2 structures going through the REHAB planning process in 1 NRD in 2 counties.
- There are 3 structures going through construction in 2 NRDs in 3 counties.

## Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program

EWP safeguards lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, flood or any other natural occurrence is causing or has caused a sudden impairment of the watershed.

- There are 4 structures going through construction in 3 NRDs.

For any inquiries about an ongoing project or a new proposed project, please contact Richard Vaughn at (402)-437-4127 or [richard.vaughn@usda.gov](mailto:richard.vaughn@usda.gov)

## Social Media

Reminder to follow Nebraska NRCS on Twitter at [@NebraskaNRCS](https://twitter.com/NebraskaNRCS). Also like/follow the [Nebraska Conservation Connections](https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaConservationConnections) page on Facebook. If your NRD has any event/item you'd like NRCS to share on their social media, please send the information to [Joanna Pope](mailto:Joanna.Pope@usda.gov).

## GovDelivery Subscriptions

This service delivers NRCS and/or FSA information via emails or text messages to subscribers on subjects they select.

If interested, you may subscribe to receive these updates by [clicking HERE](#).



Enter the email where you would like the information sent, and select the subjects on which you are interested in receiving information. No more than two messages are shared each month.

You can subscribe to not only individual subjects, but also specific agencies (NRCS or FSA), and subscribe to receive information for a designated county(s) or statewide. You can tailor the information you receive to meet your needs.



Helping People Help the Land.