

Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District

Blair Field Office Monthly Newsletter

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Perennial Cover Crops and Drones

By Armando Zarco, Papillion Creek Watershed Coordinator

In September, I was fortunate enough to be invited to attend a Perennial Groundcover Plot Tour hosted by Corteva Agriscience. The primary goal of the tour was to demonstrate the use of perennial cover crops (bluegrass) and experimentation with various suppression treatments. The objective is to establish a cover crop that does not require annual termination but rather to be suppressed, or go dormant, during the growing season and thrive during the off season.

The tour concluded with a demonstration of an aerial drone broadcasting red clover on a corn field. The payload capacity per flight was about 60 lbs. of clover seed before needing to be refilled and have a battery replaced. Regardless, the timing to spread 10 lbs. per acre of seed was limited and easily completed from the convenience of a work truck parked on the side of the field.

Perennial cover crops could potentially save you time and money in the future all while improving your soil and water quality. As drone technology advances, there could be more use to apply seed in hard-to-reach portions of farm fields thereby saving you some heartache some days.

The deadline to
apply for FY2023
EQIP funding is
November 18th!

If there is conservation work you have been considering, now is the time to stop by and fill out an application for our cost-share programs! From erosion control to cover crops to wildlife and pollinator plantings, there are many conservation practices that can help your land function, remain profitable, and protect our natural resources!

-Tom English, NRCS Soil Conservationist



In late September, over 300 sixth-grade students from 10 schools participated in 2022 Conservation Days at Summit Lake. The annual event is hosted by the Nebraska Extension with volunteers from the Papio NRD, Game and Parks, Nebraska Forest Service, and more. Sessions included focuses on the water cycle, soils, wildlife, and forestry. Students also participated in guided nature hikes through Summit Lake!

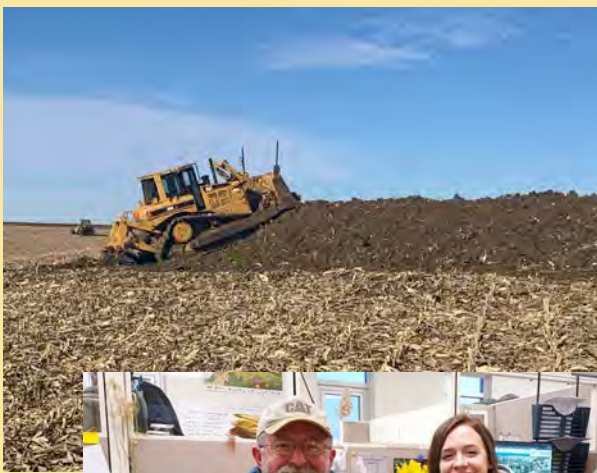
Tribute - Terry's

A Word from Terry Schumacher,
Land & Water Programs Coordinator

I remember, about 45 years ago, preparing to check fence lines to put cows out on stalks. My grandpa said "we better take along a shotgun just in case a rooster gets up." As I prepare to check the fence this year, I don't even consider the 'just in case.'

The first thing you notice is that most of the fence lines are gone, along with the grass and any trees or shrubs. The miles of fence lines provided some type of habitat for wildlife and provided opportunities for 'just in case.'

The start of harvest brings the annual comments of "we don't see much for wildlife, particularly pheasants." I hear there are too many coyotes or too many hawks, etc. I am not a wildlife biologist, but I think it is apparent that we have failed to provide a home (habitat) for them to raise a family. Think about it this way: if you had to live in a box down by the river, how big of a family would you be able to raise? The NRD and USDA has programs available to help provide habitat and encourage biodiversity.



Remembering Marty Shepard

Driving through Washington County, you can't help but take note of terrace systems stretching far and wide. Many of those miles of terraces and waterways were designed by the Papio NRD and constructed by Marty Shepard of Shepard Enterprises.

Marty was an advocate for conservation and a frequent visitor at the Blair office. Whether he was picking up designs, dropping off paperwork, or just stopping in for a chat, Marty always left us with a laugh and new story to tell.

He will be missed by all who knew him. Marty's memory lives on in the projects he built, helping to conserve and protect the natural resources in his community.

