

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**REPORT TO THE**  
**PAPIO MISSOURI RIVER NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT**  
**December 7, 2023**

**PERSONNEL:**

- The Soil Conservation Technician (SCT) positions in Blair & Tekamah are still vacant. A new round of announcements was just sent out, with an application deadline of Dec. 18. Please send any potential applicants our way!
- Our Pheasants Forever wildlife biologist, Ashley Oblander's, last day in her current position will be Dec. 8. Beginning Dec. 11, she will be the new prescribed fire specialist with Pheasants Forever for our area. We are excited for Ashley, but will soon have a vacant wildlife biologist position as well.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- I will be attending the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) Conference in Las Vegas, NV from Dec. 11-Dec. 14. Monday that week will include NRCS specific training and updates. Tuesday and Wednesday will include mini sessions on various topics important to tribal agriculture.
- There is a joint NRCS/NRD Field Staff Meeting Planned for Dec. 20 in the Blair NRCS office.

**PROGRAMS:** We continue to accept EQIP and CSP applications on a continuous basis. Applications that contain a certain set of conservation practices which have been deemed "climate smart" are eligible for the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) 'Act Now' funding. Applications that are eligible for the IRA/Act Now funding are currently our top priority. The timeline to process these applications is very compressed, especially as compared to our normal signups in previous years. So, staff have been very busy conducting site visits with producers, conducting in field assessments, and processing applications for eligibility in addition to their normal activities this time of year which include engineering field work and meeting deadlines to process contract payments prior to the end of the calendar year.

With the addition of an Urban Conservationist to our state staff, interest in small scale/urban ag practices has really picked up and is likely reflected in the high application numbers within our NRD.

**FY24 EQIP Applications**

- Current Applications at this time:
  - Blair – 53
  - Dakota City – 11
  - Tekamah- 30
  - Walthill- 23

**FY24 CSP Applications**

- Current applications at this time:
  - Blair – 16
  - Dakota City – 1
  - Tekamah- 4
  - Walthill- 2

## **CRP**

Until we have a new Farm Bill, new continuous CRP applications are on hold. However, there is always ongoing work for existing CRP contracts which mainly consists of making sure all required status reviews are completed and assisting producers with mid contract management.

***Respectfully Submitted,***

***Kristin Schlueter***  
***P-MRNRD District Conservationist***