

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
November 8, 2012
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



**DROUGHT CAN CREATE CONSERVATION
PLAN COMPLIANCE ISSUES**

As one of the worst droughts in over 30 years continues to grip Nebraska, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reminds producers to work with the local NRCS office to remain in compliance with their current conservation plan on highly erodible land.

Drought conditions affect yield, which can in turn, affect the amount of cover left on a field following harvest. Producers who have a conservation plan on their highly erodible cropland need to maintain a certain level of crop residue to remain in compliance with their conservation plan. The drought could make meeting that requirement difficult for some producers.

NRCS is providing some flexibility in its program requirements to assist producers affected by drought. Producers unable to meet residue requirements due to drought conditions may be eligible for what NRCS calls a “conservation compliance variance.”

NRCS understands that yields are down all across the state. For this reason, no-till producers who continue to do no tillage prior to planting a row crop next spring on highly erodible fields will not be found out of compliance due to a lack of crop residue. Producers who use conventional tillage operations will also be eligible for this variance if they agree to plant a cover crop following the fall or spring tillage operation.

Highly erodible fields that have been grazed or baled in 2012 would also be eligible for this variance; however, the variance would not apply to irrigated fields that had sufficient water available to produce near normal yields.

Producers who have conservation contracts may not be able to implement contracted practices or conservation enhancements in accordance with their current conservation contract schedule. Producers are urged to visit with their local NRCS staff as soon as possible if they find themselves in this situation.

U.S. Drought Monitor

November 6, 2012

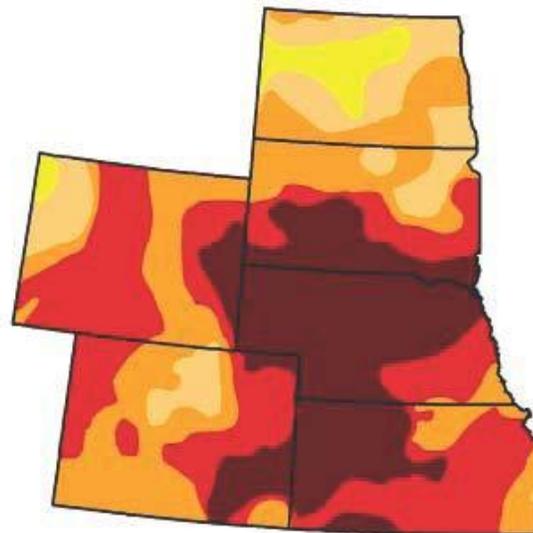
Valid 7 a.m. EST

High Plains

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.03	99.97	96.46	83.94	57.54	27.24
Last Week (10/30/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	98.20	83.87	57.02	27.44
3 Months Ago (08/07/2012 map)	2.36	97.64	87.16	77.20	49.30	7.92
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	61.66	38.34	18.12	7.22	2.07	0.04
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	98.91	83.80	61.28	24.35
One Year Ago (11/01/2011 map)	66.19	33.81	22.69	13.47	6.58	2.57

Intensity:



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, November 8, 2012

David Miskus, Climate Prediction Center/NCEP/NWS/NOAA



Report Reveals Conservation Efforts Have Strong, Positive Impacts in Watershed

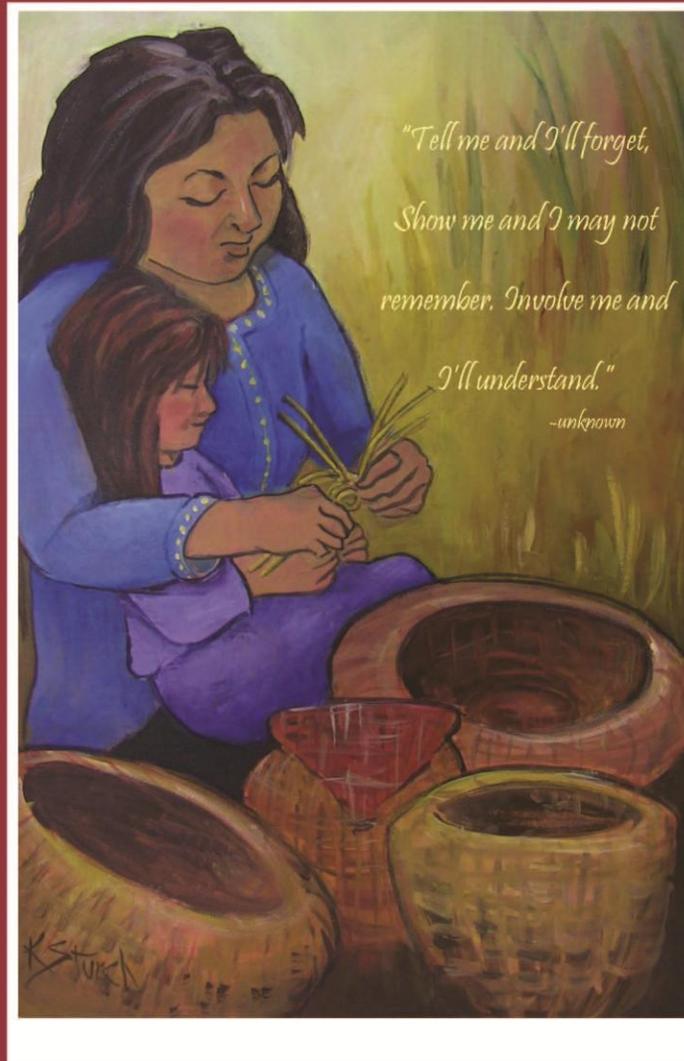
A new study shows that conservation practices have made great strides in reducing pollutant losses from cultivated cropland in the Missouri River Basin. The study – called the “Assessment of the Effects of Conservation Practices on Cultivated Cropland in the Missouri River Basin” – showed that conservation practices, such as building terraces and reducing tillage, reduce the runoff of sediment by 76 percent, nitrogen by 54 percent and phosphorus by 60 percent.

This study shows the hard work of conservation-minded farmers and ranchers is having positive benefits for waterways downstream. We are seeing cleaner water in the Missouri River, which means that we are sending cleaner water to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Conservation efforts – like the ones we have seen in this basin – are testament to the importance of conservation on the landscape level.

November is National American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month.

It is dedicated to recognizing the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of American Indians.

Conservation Our Past, Present, and Future



American Indian/ Alaska Native Heritage Month

➤ *NOVEMBER 2012* ◀

The artist, Kathy Sturch of Durant, Oklahoma says "My father taught me to be proud of my Choctaw heritage, and now I share what I have learned with my children and grandchildren." Sturch tells the story of the depiction as "Experienced Choctaw hands gently guide little fingers as they weave together--weaving not only a basket but stories--stories from the past and new stories of today. As the little hands grow into bigger experienced hands, they can weave baskets of courage and hope just as our fathers did."



U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

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