

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ACTIVITY REPORT within the P-MRNRD
JANUARY 2004

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Burt County received 5 requests for HEL determinations and 2 requests for certified wetland determinations during the month of January. Burt County also received 6 requests for conservation compliance plan updates for highly erodible land during the month of January.
- Blair field office received 4 HEL/Wetland Determination/ASCS-569 requests for January.
- One wetland determination was completed in Dakota County in January.
- Blair field office received 1 request for CAP cost-share assistance in January; the request is for a terrace system to be built this spring.
- In Dakota County, 2525 trees have been ordered; 4 NRD tree planting projects have been scheduled to date.
- A total of 13 tree orders have been received in Burt County, resulting in 1675 trees being ordered; 3 orders will be machine planted, the remainder will be hand planted.
- A site visit was conducted on a converted wetland in Burt County to assess the progress made to fulfill the restoration/mitigation agreement and plan that was signed in October 2003. Aside from the required seeding, the project has nearly been completed.
- Completed site visit, slide review and documentation of a possible converted wetland in Burt County, producer wishes to enroll field into Continuous CRP.
- Omaha field office completed 2 plan revisions, 1 was planned to a Resource Management System level.
- Omaha field office completed a "Level 2 Activation" for a Technical Service Provider (customers wishing to do electronic business with USDA).

EQIP

- Three applications for rotational grazing projects, 3 Pigeon/Jones Watershed structures and 4 grade stabilization structures are being processed for EQIP in Dakota County.
- Two status reviews were completed in Thurston County.
- Blair field office received 1 request for the EQIP program in January; the request is for a grade stabilization structure.
- The Omaha field office received 1 EQIP application for 100% no-till.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- Steve Walker and Jenny Sundberg (Tekamah) have completed a promotional mailing for possible WRP sites. The mailings will be sent out successively, first targeting the areas with the highest potential ranking. This ranking was determined by the WRP ranking model in ArcView that Andy Bohnenkamp (Tekamah) helped to develop.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

- Jenny Sundberg and Steve Rasmussen, NE Forester, completed on-site planning and GPS'ed acres for a site which will be enrolled into Continuous CRP for a riparian forest buffer of approximately 12 acres.

- Burt County completed 7 CRP contract revisions for changes of ownership, addition of practices to contracts and/or requests for cost share to complete management practices.
- A new Continuous CRP contract/plan was written for 16.7 acres of grassed filter strips in Burt County.
- In Dakota County, 1 wetland is being enrolled in the Farmable Wetlands Project, 2 filter strip projects are being enrolled and a number of eligibility determinations have been made for filter strips and waterways.
- One CRP buffer contract was completed in Thurston County.
- Omaha field office completed 2 CRP riparian tree planting plans and received 2 additional applications for grass filter strips. Also, 3 contracts were revised.

SILVER CREEK WATERSHED

- Silver Creek Sites 23, 24 and 25 have been surveyed thanks to the help of Lee Appleby, Vern Dean, Dennis Cady, Blair Gaer and Andy Bohnenkamp.
- The site showing for SC sites 15 and 19 was held on January 13.
- The bid opening for Silver Creek Watershed sites 15 and 19 was held January 28, at the Blair USDA Service Center. Terry Schumacher, NRD Blair, and Mitch Keebler, NRCS Omaha, conducted the meeting and reviewed the bids. Seven contractors submitted bids. The apparent low bidder is Camden Excavating at \$111,082.80. EQIP funding for this project will be approximately \$44,000 with the remainder contributed by the P-MRNRD.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- Site 9 was surveyed by Vern Dean, Dennis Cady, Jim Kennedy (NRCS staff), Lance Olerich and Denny Piper (NRD staff) during the week of January 12.
- Neil Stockfleth, RC South Sioux City, scoped the watershed for additional and alternate structure sites in January.
- A planning meeting to discuss watershed operations was held in Tekamah on January 21.

WATER QUALITY

- Douglas/Sarpy Counties received 2 new applications; 10 applications are pending.
- Washington County abandoned 2 wells; 10 well applications are pending.
- Dakota County has 8 well applications pending.
- Burt County abandoned 4 wells; cancelled 2 applications; 1 well application is pending.
- Thurston County has 7 well applications pending.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Doug Garrison, Don Doty and Andy Bohnenkamp put together a Land Use GIS project for the Silver Creek Watershed. It compares the land use in the Silver Creek Watershed from 1983 to 1993 using natural resource census data and the 1993 USGS Landuse/Landcover data. The next step of the process is to incorporate 2003 land use data in order to have a 30-year trend of data for the whole watershed. The goal is to put the project to use throughout the entire Papio-Missouri River NRD on a county-wide basis in order to target conservation programs to areas that are found to trend towards conservation needs.
- Jenny Sundberg, Tekamah, Don Atkinson, Blaine Gaer, Dennis Cady, Walthill, received Level II Conservation Planning Certification from Area Resource Specialist, Doug Garrison.
- The South Sioux City staff provided new items and photos with captions for the NRD Share Page published in the *Dakota County Star* for the month of January. The

news items were: What is a Watershed?, Lewis & Clark Scenic Byway Annual Meeting and Loess Hills RC&D Meeting. The photos with captions were: Dennis Cady, SCT Walthill, using a GPS unit to locate CRP buffer strips, and Before, During and After Construction of the Elk Creek Streambed Stabilization Structure.

- A “Programs and Practices Information Packet” for the Pigeon/Jones Creek Watershed has been prepared and reproduced by the South Sioux City staff.
- A Continuous CRP Practices fact sheet was prepared for distribution to farmers and landowners.
- A tabletop display on conservation practices and the Pigeon/Jones Watershed was prepared for a Woodbury County Conservation Foundation and Audubon Society Conservation Forum. The display will be used for Pigeon/Jones Watershed informational meetings.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Don Atkinson and Dennis Cady, Walthill, provided Gerry Heinsheid (Omaha tribe) technical assistance regarding an urban drainage way grant for the City of Macy.
- Don Atkinson proofed (Omaha tribe) a rough draft, grant proposal for the Blackbird Creek watershed and made recommendations to Mark Versch, Omaha tribe.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Neil Stockfleth, South Sioux City, attended a Crystal Cove Lake COE Section 514 rehabilitation project meeting on January 6.
- Kelly Fravel, NRD, attended a South Sioux City Tree Board meeting on January 13.
- Don Atkinson, Walthill, attended a SSURGO (Soil Survey Geographic database) presentation given by Luis Hernandez and Shandy Bittle (NRCS State Office) at the Winnebago Agency.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha
February 9, 2004

Cc: Ken Noonan, ASTC/FO, NRCS, Lincoln