

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**ACTIVITY REPORT *within the P-MRNRD***  
**JANUARY 2007**

---

**NRCS CHIEF ARLEN LANCASTER VISITS OMAHA**

Chief of NRCS, Arlen Lancaster, was in Omaha to hold a press conference to discuss the Bush Administration's farm bill proposals. These proposals reflect the views heard during the USDA's 52 Farm Bill Forums held across the country. Prior to conducting his press conference at the downtown Doubletree, Chief Lancaster toured the Natural Resources Center, meeting NRCS and NRD staff and board members. NRD staff conducted a power point presentation that provided the Chief with information on the Papio-Missouri River NRD as well as projects.

**CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION**

- Blair field office (FO) has 6 conservation applications for spring construction.
- Blair FO has 46 miscellaneous NRD cost-share applications for FY07. These applications include CRP seeding, pasture renovation/cropland conversions, tree planting, Pheasants Forever Wildlife Habitat seeding and field buffer/filter strip seeding; 22 are completed and paid.
- The following tree orders have been received for spring 2007 plant: Blair 4,000 trees; Omaha 2,725 trees; Dakota City 5,050 trees.
- Omaha FO completed 13 conservation plan revisions.
- The District has paid 19 landowners' \$88,320.96 cost share through the 2007 Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program.
- Ralph Arauza, Blair NRCS, completed the Natural Resource Inventory for Washington County.
- Tekamah FO has developed tree plans for several producers. One tree plan that is being developed is associated with a WRP site.
- Justin Linder, RC at Tekamah, has continued to be involved with Conservation Security Program (CSP) for upcoming training in January, working with State office staff to review and create the grazing land documentation requirements along with eligibility requirements.
- Currently there are 25 conservation plans in the process of being updated in Burt County.
- Evelyn Maslonka, Burt County, processed 1 NRD EQIP cost-share payment for a terrace job and has sent it to the NRD; and she has processed 3 Conservation Assistance Plan approvals for EQIP that are in the process of being certified for payment.
- Three wetland determinations have been finalized in Burt County with the letter and documentation returned to FSA and the producers. They are continuing to process and complete the delineations that are still pending. They also completed 31 Highly Erodible Land (HEL) determinations.
- Walthill FO staff completed 9 HEL determinations and submitted 1 Soil and Water Conservation Assistance program payment.
- Walthill FO staff completed 1 certified wetland determination.

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)**

- Omaha FO received 13 new applications for ranking.
- Blair FO has 45 applications to be ranked for 2007 funding.
- Blair FO completed payments on 2 terrace systems, a pipeline and a nutrient and pest management incentive in the amount of \$31,809.91.

- Omaha FO completed 4 payments and 1 contract modification.
- Dakota County has received 18 applications that include 1 livestock manure facility, 1 irrigation conversion project, 1 organic transition incentive request, and a number of pasture management projects. Several grade stabilization structures are included in the EQIP applications.
- Tekamah FO certified nutrient and pest management practices for an EQIP contract payment.
- Practices have been certified for 5 EQIP contracts with 3 having the payment approved in Burt County.
- Walthill FO staff processed payments on 3 contracts and received 9 applications.

#### **WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)**

##### **WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)**

- Dakota County submitted a request for payment for the excavation earthwork on a restoration project.
- Burt County has received 1 new WREP/WRP application; the application has been processed and sent to the Wetlands Team.

#### **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)**

##### **CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)**

- Blair FO received 2 applications for continuous CRP (a field border and a filter strip).
- Tekamah FO completed a contract for a riparian buffer.
- Thurston County submitted 2 CRP waterway payments, received 2 filter strip and 1 waterway sign-ups.

#### **SILVER CREEK WATERSHED**

- Tekamah FO finalized the practice quantities and finished the EQIP payment on site 25. Sites 23 and 24 are pending payment.

#### **PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED**

- Walthill FO NRD staff worked on a dike in the watershed.
- The Dakota County Road Department met with NRCS staff to prepare an application for NRD funds to construct a grade stabilization road structure above site #15.
- Four applications for grade stabilization structures were received, 2 of which are in structure numbered sites.

#### **WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP)**

- Dakota County received 2 applications for cedar clearing and native grass restoration.

#### **INFORMATION/EDUCATION**

- The Dakota County FO staff provided news items for the NRD share page published in the Dakota County Star for the month of January. Articles included: Deadline for Soil and Water Conservation Funding, Outreach Efforts to New and Limited Resource Farmers, RC&D Announces Household Hazardous Waste Collections, and Nebraska Loess Hills RC&D Projects Report. Photos with captions were included of a Pasture Management Seminar and a No-till Workshop that were held in Dakota City and of a shelterbelt near Dakota City.
- Walthill FO mailed 31 agendas and fliers for pasture management workshop and 46 agendas and fliers for no-till workshop.

## **DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

- Walthill NRD staff completed status reviews of buffer strips for the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program.
- Walthill FO submitted 10 Lands for Conservation payments.

## **TRAINING/MEETINGS**

- NRD field office staff, Terry Schumacher, John Zaugg, Denny Piper, Dennis Cady, and NRCS field office staff, Mitch Keebler, Sam Thomas and Chuck Leinen, attended the Nebraska Land Improvement Contractors Association meeting at Kearney.
- A pasture management seminar was held on January 9, at the Dakota City Service Center; 43 people took part in the seminar with 37 of them producers from nearby counties.
- Kelly Fravel, Dakota City, took part in a South Sioux City tree board meeting on January 9.
- A no-till meeting was held on January 16, at the Dakota City Service Center; 48 people attended with 39 of them producers from the area.
- An earthmoving contractors meeting was held on January 30, at the Dakota City Service Center; 48 participants were in attendance with 34 contractors and employees representing 20 contracting firms in the audience.
- Neil Stockfleth and a Dakota County WRP participant attended a habitat management meeting held in Tekamah on January 17. Also attending from NRCS were Justin Linder and Sylvia Thomas.
- Neil Stockfleth took part in a Brush Management teleconference held on January 26.
- Andy Bohnenkamp, NRCS Tekamah, attended GPS survey training in Wahoo, Prescribed Burning workshop in Osceola, the Stream Bank Stabilization workshop in Omaha and the contractors' meeting in Dakota City.
- Justin Linder, NRCS Tekamah, completed the Nutrient and Pest Management course prerequisites for the upcoming training January 30 – February 1, attended the grazing land seminar meeting in Dakota City and gave a presentation of NRCS objectives and information about the NRCS programs available for grazing lands, attended the No-till seminar meeting in Dakota City, and attended Wetlands Management meeting in Tekamah.
- Don Atkinson, NRCS, attended Nutrient and Pest Management workshop in Lincoln and attended pasture management and no-till workshops in Dakota City.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, February 7, 2007