

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ACTIVITY REPORT within the P-MRNRD
DECEMBER 2003

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Burt County received 3 requests for HEL determinations and 2 requests for certified wetland determinations during the month of December.
- Blair field office has received 9 HEL/Wetland Determination/ASCS-569 requests for FY 2004.
- Thurston County completed 10 HEL determinations and have 3 wetland violations pending.
- Dakota County completed 1 wetland determination in December resulting in a converted wetland determination.
- All 23 terrace jobs in Burt County have been constructed and all but one of those have been submitted for payment. Approximately 86,000 feet of terraces were constructed in Burt County.
- Three tree plans have been completed in Burt County. Burt County has also received 6 tree orders for trees that will be hand planted.
- Blair field office has completed 32 conservation practices (cost-share of \$210,000) for Fall 2003.
- Blair field office has received 33 tree orders for 6,000 trees to be planted Spring 2004.
- Thurston County completed 5 terrace projects.
- Four NRD tree planting projects are scheduled in Dakota County for 2004; 2,225 trees have been ordered. Also, 1 windbreak was planned in December.

EQIP

- Four terrace projects in Burt County have been constructed and all payment applications have been submitted.
- Two of the Silver Creek grade control structures in Burt County, which will be site reviewed in January, were pre-staked to show where tree clearing will be needed.
- Omaha field office received 2 requests for no-till through EQIP.
- Blair field office is working with the Omaha field office on the design review for an animal waste facility to be built with EQIP funds in Washington County.
- Blair field office submitted 4 EQIP conservation practices for payment. The practices included a whole farm planned terrace system with underground tile outlets and a waterway, a terrace system with underground tile outlets and 2 practices for cross fencing with pipeline.
- NRCS staff, Don Atkinson, Dennis Cady and Diego Ayala, assisted two producers in Thurston County with their nutrient management and waste utilization plans.
- South Sioux City field office is processing 2 EQIP applications for rotational grazing projects.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- An application package was completed and submitted to the NRCS State Office for review on a new WRP application including approximately 7 acres in Burt County.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

- Four new Continuous CRP contracts were planned and approved in Burt County during the month of December.
- Blair field office wrote two Continuous CRP contracts.
- Three CRP waterway projects were completed in Thurston County and one filter strip application was received.
- Two wetlands are being enrolled in the Farmable Wetlands Pilot Program in Dakota County.

SILVER CREEK WATERSHED

- Blair NRD staff has been working on the bid notice, contractor letters and bid packets for Silver Creek Watershed Sites 15 and 19. Pre-bid site showing is scheduled for January 13, 2004 and bid opening January 28, 2004.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- Construction on structure #3 near Hubbard will be completed in the spring.
- Engineering firms have been in contact with the field office concerning the Request for Proposals released by the P-MRNRD for design of site #15.

WATER QUALITY

- Douglas/Sarpy Counties abandoned 2 wells; received 2 new applications; 8 well applications are pending.
- Washington County abandoned 4 wells; 11 well applications are pending.
- Dakota County has 8 well applications pending.
- Burt County received 1 new application; 6 well applications are pending.
- Thurston County has 7 well applications pending.

SARPY/DOUGLAS SOIL SURVEY UPDATE

- The final draft of the Washington County manuscript was delivered to Patrick Cowsert, Soil Scientist at Omaha, for review prior to publication. Barring any major problems, the review of the material should be complete by the second week in January and any additional edits will then be made and sent back so that the soil survey can be published. The publishing process is completely electronic and the turn around time is much shorter than if the survey had been sent to the National Publishing Office (NPO) where there is a backlog. The Monona County Iowa Soil Survey which was sent to NPO after it was completed in 1995 is still not available to the public.

NATIONAL RESOURCES INVENTORY (NRI)

- Omaha field office provided information such as conservation programs and conservation practices present as well as quantities and year implemented for NRI sites in Douglas County.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Jim Krause, a senior at Homer High School, spent a day job-shadowing Vern Dean, NRCS Technician at South Sioux City.
- 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 December. The news items were: EQIP Funds Available, Time To Place Tree Orders, Trees and Shrubs Add Up To Savings, and an article on the Lewis and Clark Scenic Byway. The photos with captions were: New Resource Conservationist Neil Stockfleth, Jim Krause Job Shadow Student From Homer High School, and Pigeon/Jones Watershed Site #3 Concrete Spillway.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Don Atkinson and Dennis Cady, NRCS Walthill, assisted Mark Versch, Omaha tribe employee, with information on Blackbird watershed.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Jenny Sundberg, RC Tekamah, has been cooperating with the Burt County Extension Agent to plan a No-Till Workshop in Tekamah, planned for February.
- Andy Bohnenkamp, Tekamah, attended the Lower Elkhorn No-Till Program training course.
- Jenny Sundberg and Andy Bohnenkamp completed the online Ethics training required by NRCS.
- Jenny Sundberg completed the Local Registration Authority (LRA) self-study training to become a certified LRA for the Tekamah field office.
- Terry Schumacher, NRD Blair, attended the Omaha Public Schools Ag Advisory Committee meeting. Terry was recently appointed Chairperson of the Committee.
- Terry Schumacher attended the Washington County Supervisors Meeting with Dick Sklenar and Steve Oltmans. The NRD staff presented the Board with information on the Washington County Rural Water Project that is planned to be built in late 2004.
- Neil Jensen, RC Blair, has been assisting P-MRNRD NRCS staff with Protracts training.
- Terry Schumacher, NRD Blair, and John Zaugg, NRD Omaha, attended Water Operator Training at Fremont.
- Dennis Piper, Dennis Cady and Don Atkinson, Walthill staff, attended a multi-agency meeting chaired by Clayton Stallings, NE Game & Parks, at the Winnebago Agency to discuss CRP restoration to be conducted by tribes.
- Vern Dean, Technician at South Sioux City, has been receiving GPS survey training from Dennis Cady, Technician at Walthill.
- Neil Stockfleth, Walthill, attended a Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) Missouri River Corridor meeting with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and The Nature Conservancy personnel on December 22.

PERSONNEL

- Casey Latta and Neil Dominy will be detailed to the Omaha field office to join Patrick Cowsert in completing work on the soil survey updates of Sarpy and Douglas Counties. Casey is currently working in the York Service Center; he is originally from Stratton and is a graduate of UNL. He began in Sioux County in 1988 and has worked in Sheridan, Dundy, Cherry, Grant and Hall Counties in Nebraska and McKinley County in New Mexico before being stationed in York. Neil is currently working in the Stanton Service Center where he has been training with Gary McCoy. He is originally from Hebron and is a recent graduate of UNL. They will begin December 29, and will be stationed here for approximately one year. Around that time, the soil scientists in the state will be reorganized, and there will no longer be a soil scientist stationed in Omaha.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha
January 7, 2004

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