

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

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- The Omaha field office received orders for 9,175 trees this spring; 2,225 trees were planted by NRD staff on 4 sites in Douglas/Sarpy Counties.
- Three tree plantings scheduled in Dakota County for spring have been completed.
- Denny Piper and Rod Kinning, NRD Walthill, completed tree planting in Thurston county and assisted Washington County personnel with their tree planting.
- Two terrace projects were completed in Thurston County.
- Field office staff from Omaha and Walthill have documented one wetland violation in Thurston County. Another potential wetland violation and wetland appeal are being processed.
- Blair field office has received 24 HEL/Wetland Determination/ASCS-569 requests for FY2003.
- Tekamah received 2 Certified Wetland Determination requests and 1 HEL Determination request in May.
- Burt County completed 9 Highly Erodible Land (HEL) status reviews and have 2 to complete - crops have not been planted.
- In Burt County, 11 miles of terraces were designed and constructed this spring; 4 waterways were constructed; 7 tree plantings were completed.
- Blair field office has received 5 applications for summer construction in Washington County.
- Omaha field office received 1 new application for summer construction and 1 cropland conversion application consisting of approximately 55 acres was completed.

EQIP

- Don Atkinson, RC Walthill, and Diego Ayala, Water Quality Team of Norfolk, visited with 2 EQIP applicants for nutrient management and ag waste facilities.
- In Burt County, 3 producers have signed EQIP applications for rangeland practices consisting of cross fencing and livestock watering facilities. Another producer has shown interest.
- Three additional producers in Burt County have signed EQIP applications for conversion from gravity irrigation to a center pivot. Another producer with 3 tracts has shown interest in applying for cost share to re-nozzle pivots that are currently high pressure to low pressure systems.
- In Burt County, 2 deferred EQIP applications for center pivots will be resubmitted; 1 to re-nozzle pivot to low pressure, and 1 to convert from gravity irrigation to center pivots.
- In Burt County, 1 livestock waste facility application has been submitted. The Livestock Waste System and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) have been completed. The conservation plan is being completed.

- In Burt County, owners of Silver Creek structures that have been surveyed and designed have all been contacted in regard to applying for cost share through EQIP; 2 have signed applications thus far.
- Blair field office staff are working with several landowners that have shown an interest in EQIP practices by obtaining signatures on an application. The next step of the process will be to rank the applications.
- Washington County has 2 landowners (Larsen Bros. and Mathiesen Bros.) that have completed plans for grade stabilization structures to be built this summer. Bid packets have been supplied to the landowners, and they will be mailing information to the contractors in the next two weeks.
- Omaha field office received 1 new application for nutrient management covering approximately 160 acres.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- Wet weather has kept contractor from starting construction on a WRP project in Burt County that has been staked and designed.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

- In Thurston County one grass waterway contract was completed.
- In Burt County inventory and evaluations has been completed for 11 possible filter strip applications for fall.
- Five CRP status reviews have been completed in Burt County.
- In Burt County, 4 seedings of filter strips were completed and submitted for payment.
- In Burt County, 1 CREP contract consisting of grass filter strips and a resource corner was approved for approximately 2.4 acres.
- Burt County completed 4 requests for plan revisions.
- Blair field office has received 1 continuous CRP application. Staff has completed 5 continuous CRP and CREP contracts.
- Omaha field office received 6 CREP applications, 2 other contracts consisting of 18 acres of CP25 and 15 acres of grass filter strips were reseeded. Also, grass seeding sheets for approximately 200 CREP acres were provided to producers.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- 10.5 acres of contour buffer strips and 3.9 acres of grass waterways were seeded on a farm located in the Pigeon/Jones Creek watershed.
- Tony Lockhart, RC South Sioux City, continues to schedule and conduct one-on-one meetings with Pigeon/Jones producers updating conservation plans and promoting land treatment in the watershed. This effort will continue until all of the producers have been contacted.

WATER QUALITY

- Douglas/Sarpy Counties abandoned 2 wells; received 2 applications; 7 well applications are pending.
- Washington County abandoned 4 wells; received 3 applications; 13 well applications are pending.
- Dakota County has 9 well applications pending.
- Burt County has 4 well applications pending.

- Thurston County has 4 well applications pending.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Don Atkinson, RC Walthill, provided the following assistance to the Omaha and Winnebago Indian Reservations: information on topographic quad sheets, warm season grass mixtures, justification for installing push-up terraces, prime and unique farmland possibly impacted by a planned housing project.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- NRD staff, Terry Schumacher and John Zaugg participated at the Earth Day celebration at Elmwood Park.
- Neil Jensen and Ralph Arauza, NRCS staff Blair, participated with staff from Cargill and the Washington County Extension Service at the Fourth Grade Conservation School Days with students from Arbor Park Elementary School. The program was presented to students in three morning sessions that included nature games and conservation demonstrations. Seedling trees were distributed to students and teachers.
- Darlene Hensley, NRD Secretary Blair, Linda Ellett, NRD Secretary Omaha, Don Doty and Chuck Leinen, NRCS Omaha, and Ralph Arauza, NRCS Blair, participated in the 2-day water festival that was attended by Omaha and surrounding schools; approximately 1,800 teachers/students attended Water Works at Schram Park.
- The South Sioux City field office staff provided news items and photos with captions for the NRD Share Page published in the *South Sioux City Star* for the month of May. The news items were on the Pesticide Container Recycling Program schedule of collection times and sites, the anniversary of the 2002 Farm Bill, an editorial on windbreak management, and the Game & Parks' CRP Management Access Program. The photos with captions were of the Plant-A-Tree program, the contour buffer strips surveyed in Pigeon/Jones Watershed, and the South Sioux City Tree Board.
- Patrick Cowsert, Soil Scientist at Omaha, assisted with the soils portion of the State Envirothon Competition in Niobrara, NE on May 2-3.

MEETINGS

- Don Atkinson, RC Walthill, and Tony Lockhart, RC South Sioux City, met with Joanna Pope to develop a district-wide volunteer needs assessment and volunteer goals for fiscal year 2004.

TRAINING

- NRCS field office staff attended Program Training in May.
- Patrick Cowsert, Soil Scientist at Omaha, attended Soil Quality: Assessment and Application for Field Staff training in Norfolk on May 20-22.
- Omaha field office staff attended an Erosion & Sediment Control Workshop.

DISTRICT INFORMATION

- Rod Kinning and Denny Piper, NRD Walthill, assisted Dakota County rural water staff by disking and seeding trenched areas.

CIVIL RIGHTS

- Don Atkinson attended a Civil Rights Committee meeting as Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) for Native Americans.

- Ralph Arauza, NRCS Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (Blair field office), attended the quarterly Civil Rights Meeting in Lincoln.

SOIL SURVEY UPDATE

- The Washington County Soil Survey update has been sent to St. Paul, MN for technical editing, proofing prior to being sent to editor for formatting and release on CD.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha
June 9, 2003

cc:

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RH:le:Activity Report