

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

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Blair field office (FO) has 8 conservation applications for spring construction.
- Blair FO has 45 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; 21 are completed and paid \$13,729.04.
- The following tree orders have been received for spring 2007 plant: Blair 6,350 trees; Omaha 3,500 trees; Dakota City 5,875 trees; Walthill 2,175 trees.
- The District has paid 20 landowners' \$96,761.64 cost share through the 2007 Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program.
- Tekamah FO completed several conservation plan revisions; additionally, 18 other revision requests are pending.
- Tekamah FO has approved 2 Conservation Assistance Plan (CAP) payments in the Silver Creek Watershed and has processed 3 CAP applications for payment.
- Walthill FO processed 10 CAP payments; 5 were Lands for Conservation.
- Walthill FO received 6 spring CAP applications; 4 summer CAP applications and 5 fall CAP applications.
- Omaha FO processed 4 CAP applications for payment.
- Omaha FO received 1 request for a certified wetland determination.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

February 28, was the cutoff date to have all EQIP applications ranked for consideration for 2007 funding. The P-MRNRD received an initial EQIP allocation of \$550,000 of which \$30,000 will be used for Ground and Surface Water Conservation (GSWC). Following is application information for each office.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

	<u>Applications</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>GSWC</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Blair	18	\$219,451.39	\$15,889.00	\$235,340.39
Dakota	18	\$474,320.00	\$15,000.00	\$489,320.00
Douglas	3	\$ 37,550.00	\$13,437.00	\$ 50,987.00
Sarpy	14	\$155,969.38	\$ 0.00	\$155,969.38
Thurston	11	\$ 67,939.50	\$ 0.00	\$ 67,939.50
Washington	42	\$541,551.90	\$ 4,262.00	\$545,813.90
TOTALS	106	\$1,496,782.17	\$48,588.00	\$1,545,370.17

50 CONTRACTS WILL BE FUNDED WITH THE INITIAL ALLOCATION.

- Tekamah FO completed 2 EQIP modifications and payment certification.
- Omaha FO processed 3 EQIP applications for payment for \$50,807.66; practices were terraces with underground tile outlets.
- Omaha FO completed 3 EQIP modifications.

WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- Tekamah FO continues to assist landowners, including the Omaha and Winnebago Tribes, with needed paperwork and coordinating meetings between surveyors and producers.
- Rod Johnson, appraiser, secured aerial photos for WREP (Omaha tribal tracts) to prepare appraisals.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)

- Blair FO completed 2 contracts for continuous CRP (a field border and a grass filter strip).
- Dakota County accepted a Continuous CRP application for a field windbreak.
- Tekamah FO is currently developing a wetland renovation plan for a new CRP wetland application.
- Walthill FO received 1 grass filter strip application.
- Omaha FO received a CRP eligibility for a quail buffer and a CRP wetland.

SILVER CREEK WATERSHED

- A site visit for a potential grade stabilization structure was completed to determine feasibility in Burt County.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- Dakota County FO received EQIP applications for grade stabilization structure sites #1 and #18 as well as applications for 3 additional sites.
- The Dakota County Commissioners voted to approve the County Road Department Budget which includes construction of grade stabilization road structure sites #16 and #16A in Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP)

- Dakota County ranked 2 WHIP 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 February. Articles included: Dakota County Farmer is PF Master Conservationist of the Year, Order Tree Seedlings Now, Earth Team Volunteer Opportunities, and Mid-States Economic Development Conference Scheduled. Photos with captions were included of the contractors' meeting that was held in Dakota City, Jim Bliven receiving the PF Master Conservationist award and of NRCS Chief Lancaster's visit to Omaha.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- Terry Schumacher, Blair NRD, completed the status reviews for the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program sites in Washington County, and John Zaugg, Omaha NRD, completed the status reviews for sites in Douglas/Sarpy Counties.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Terry Schumacher, NRD Blair, attended the State Habitat meeting in Grand Island and attended training on Rural Water in Fremont.

- Neil Stockfleth, NRCS Dakota City, attended the Nebraska No-till Conference held at Mead on February 7.
- Vern Dean and Sam Thomas, NRCS Dakota City, took part in a Performance Results System (progress reporting) teleconference held on February 7.
- Sam Thomas, NRCS, took part in a statewide engineering teleconference held on February 20, participated in a WRP design and training session held at Omaha on February 22, and attended the northeast Nebraska Land Improvement Contractors Association meeting held at Norfolk on February 26.
- Andy Bohnenkamp, NRCS Tekamah, attended WRP Technicians meeting for WRP construction at the Omaha FO on February 22, attended rock testing training on February 23, and continues to complete his Job Approval Authority for Prescribed Burning.
- Justin Linder, NRCS Tekamah, provided training for Conservation Security Program to help the field offices in assisting producers to improve their grazing lands to be eligible for the program down the road. Training was done via teleconference on February 15, to the Lower Big Blue and Little Blue NRDs. Justin also attended the No-till Conference in Mead on February 7.
- Walthill FO and NRD staff attended Blackbird Creek Rapid Watershed Assessment meeting at Omaha Tribal office in Macy.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Walthill FO staff assisted BIA employee with technical assistance regarding cost-shared conservation work that had been done on an allotment on the Omaha reservation.

CIVIL RIGHTS

- Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, attended a teleconference on changes in dealing with the tribes.

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