

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

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- South Sioux City field office has received 17 HEL/Wetland determination requests for FY 2003.
- Blair field office has received 19 HEL/Wetland Determination/ASCS-569 requests for FY 2003.
- Omaha field office has received 15 HEL/Wetland determination requests.
- Blair field office has received 16 applications for summer construction in Washington county.
- South Sioux City has received 21 orders for 2,950 trees to date.
- 19.0 acres of cropland have been signed up into the WILD NE program in Dakota county.
- Omaha field office has received 3 applications for summer construction.
- Blair field office has received 11 applications for assistance with cropland conversions and CRP seedings.
- Blair field office has received 80 orders for 19,850 trees to be planted in Spring 2003. 12,400 trees are being planted by NRD staff on 28 sites in Washington County; 9 landowners have requested assistance for the FY 2004 tree program.
- Tekamah has received 2 HEL/Wetland Determination requests since April 7, 2003.
- Burt County has received 6 requests for new or updated conservation plans.
- In Burt County 13 terrace projects were staked and designed, 11 of which have been constructed; 3 grass waterways were also constructed.
- Four tree plantings have been completed and 3 tree plantings have been staked but not planted in Burt County.
- Thurston County approved 4 cost-share applications for trees.
- In Thurston County, 3 wetland determinations were completed with work continuing on 3 appeals.

EQIP

- In Burt County, 2 producers have shown interest and requested information on rangeland practices that will be applied for in EQIP. Practices include cross fencing and livestock watering facilities.
- Omaha field office received 1 new request for a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for a feedlot and 1 new application for a grade control structure.
- Walthill field office received one EQIP application.
- Diego Ayala, NRCS State Office, and Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, met with 2 operators with EQIP applications to discuss their nutrient management practices.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- One wetland reserve contract has been staked and scheduled for construction this spring in Burt County; 5.4 acres of wetland will be restored when the project is completed.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

- South Sioux City field office completed 3 Continuous CRP contracts for a total of 28.6 acres of grassed waterways. These are currently under construction and will be completed in May.
- Blair field office has received 5 Continuous CRP and CREP applications for buffer strips.
- Omaha has received 35 applications for CREP conservation corners and grass filter strips.
- Omaha field office revised 7 CRP contracts to allow for reseeding or prescribed burning.
- Burt County received 3 requests for contract revisions to include prescribed burning. Seeding was completed on 1 revised general CRP contract and 1 Continuous CRP filter strip. Also, 4 buffer strips have been staked and are ready for seeding.
- Thurston County completed 1 CRP waterway contract.
- Dennis Cady, NRCS Walthill, assisted Denny Piper, NRD Walthill, in reviewing sites listed in a nutrient management plan submitted to DEQ.
- Dennis Cady, NRCS Walthill, assisted Dakota County personnel with layout of contour buffer strips.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- NRCS employees, Vern Dean and Dennis Cady, completed the survey of P/J Structure 4; they were assisted by volunteer Tyler Harris.
- NRCS State Office and NRCS Field Office staff staked 10.5 acres of contour buffer strips and 3.9 acres of grassed waterways.
- Tony Lockhart, RC at South Sioux City, has scheduled and conducted one-on-one meetings with the P/J producers to update conservation plans and promote land treatment in the watershed throughout the month of April. This effort will continue until all producers have been contacted.

WATER QUALITY

- Douglas/Sarpy Counties received 2 well applications; 7 well applications are pending.
- Washington County abandoned 2 wells; received 4 applications; 14 well applications are pending.
- Dakota County has 9 well applications pending.
- Thurston County received 1 well application.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Jim Kennedy, NRCS Omaha, gave Dennis Cady and Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, technical assistance regarding storage terrace on Omaha reservation land.

- Don Atkinson assisted Jason McCauley (BIA Soil Conservationist) with information on pasture and hayland management suitability groups. Don also discussed cost-share programs and new CRP regulations.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Blair field office submitted a news article "Earth Team Volunteers Mean The World To NRCS" to the *Enterprise*.
- Blair field office NRCSNRD staff attended and participated in various Arbor Day celebrations. Neil Jensen gave a presentation on conservation, students and teachers received 40 seedlings supplied by the NRD and planted trees at a local park. Terry Schumacher planted trees at Walnut Creek Recreation Area. The NRD donated 200 seedlings to Dana College for their Arbor Day program.
- 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 April. The news items were on the Earth Team which is the USDA volunteer program, how well sealing protects ground water, the Winnebago Bison Project, National Park Service grant to the NE Loess Hills RC&D to build a Scenic Byway kiosk, and Soil and Water Stewardship Week. The photos with captions were of the presentation of a volunteer appreciation certificate and gift, volunteer Tyler Harris surveying with Vern Dean, and a dam built with EQIP funds targeting Pigeon/Jones producers.
- The South Sioux City Service Center held a volunteer appreciation coffee on April 15, to commemorate National Volunteer Week. Dick Leitschuck was honored for his over **880** hours of volunteer time logged.
- Kelly Fravel, South Sioux City NRD Secretary, Blair Gaer, Walthill NRCS Technician and *Ann* Verzani, NE Extension Service, distributed 1,000 trees and wildflower seed packets to 17 schools in Dakota and Thurston Counties as part of the annual Plant-A-Tree program during the week of April 21-25. Trees and wildflower packets were also provided for the annual Arbor Day celebration held in South Sioux City on April 25.

MEETINGS

- Robert Hall, NRCS Omaha, met with representatives from the City of Lincoln to discuss CRP and EQIP options for cropland that will host new wells for the City of Lincoln in the future.
- NRCS/NRD staff attended the All Employees Workload Meeting at Tekamah.
- Terry Schumacher, NRD, attended the Tree Planting Workshop at Stanton.
- Kelly Fravel, NRD, attended the South Sioux City Tree Board meeting on April **8**.

TRAINING

- Lee Appleby, NRCS Tekamah, assisted Stan Riggle, State Cultural Resources Specialist, to provide **3** days of Cultural Resource Training to **26** NRCS employees from across Nebraska and Kansas. The training was held in Tekamah.
- Jennifer Sundberg, RC at Tekamah, and Don Atkinson, RC at Walthill, attended FSA training in Lincoln for upcoming General CRP sign up. Sundberg and Atkinson coordinated a teleconference to inform other NRCS employees within the P-MRNRD of program changes.

CIVIL RIGHTS

- Ralph Arauza, NRCS Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (Blair field office), participated in the Career Days at UNL.

DISTRICT INFORMATION

- Rod Kinning and Denny Piper, NRD Walthill, planted 5,000 trees and shrubs; conducted well monitoring inspections and conducted 2 chemigation inspections.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha
May 8, 2003

cc:

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RH:le:Activity Report