

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**ACTIVITY REPORT**  
**MAY 2007**

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**CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION**

- Blair field office (FO) has 20 conservation applications for spring; 12 are completed and paid; 5 have been cancelled or paid under the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP); 3 are completed and waiting on paperwork.
- Blair FO staff completed 1 conservation plan.
- Blair FO has 71 miscellaneous NRD cost-share applications for FY2007. The applications include CRP seeding, pasture renovation/cropland conversions, tree planting, Pheasants Forever Wildlife Habitat seeding and field buffer/filter strip seeding. 44 applications are completed and paid \$23,074.78. This includes cost sharing on 2,625 trees, 227 acres Cropland Conversions/Wildlife Habitat and 404.7 acres of CRP plantings.
- The District has paid 31 landowners' \$114,154.99 cost share through the 2007 Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program.
- Dakota County completed 6 Highly Erodible Land (HEL) determinations and revised conservation plans on 8 tracts.
- Dakota County staff surveyed and designed a livestock pipeline and fence system, and a water and sediment control basin; the control basin is approved for fall construction through the NRD's Conservation Assistance Program (CAP). A second livestock pipeline system was site located using GPS equipment.
- Dakota County paid on a cropland conversion to pasture project and approved 6 tree planting projects; 4 of the tree projects have been completed and paid. Also, 10 Pheasants Forever food plot applications were received.
- Thurston County completed 1 waterway and terrace project and processed for NRD cost-share payment.
- Walthill FO received 1 HEL determination request and completed another. They also received 2 requests for certified wetland determinations with field work completed on one.
- Dakota County completed 3 conservation compliance status reviews and 2 follow-up residue checks.
- Blair FO staff notified Washington County landowners and producers on 20 tracts for conservation compliance status reviews. Field reviews have been completed.
- Walthill FO staff sent out 27 appointment letters for compliance reviews; field work has been completed on 24 annual status reviews.
- Omaha FO staff notified Douglas/Sarpy County producers on 20 tracts for conservation compliance status reviews; field reviews have been completed.
- Burt County has completed 9 of the 20 compliance status reviews.
- Justin Linder and Andy Bohnenkamp, NRCS Tekamah, conducted a county assessment for the recent flooding that occurred in Burt County in the last week of April.
- Justin Linder, NRCS Tekamah, completed cost-share estimate for producer in the Lower Elkhorn NRD for a Flow Meter and Surge Valve.
- Justin Linder completed a No-Till survey with a producer in Burt County for the no-till survey in conjunction with "Nebraska Farmer".
- Tekamah FO processed 8 CAP payments for grass seedings and terrace systems.
- Tekamah FO has been responding to wetland determination requests that have been coming in since the recent rains.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)**

Allocation of EQIP funds for 2007 for the P-MRNRD is complete. The information provided below includes the number of contracts and funding approved for each county. Most of the contracts will be completed fall of 2007. An additional 40% cost share will be provided by the NRD through CAP for most of the contracts.

County	Contracts Obligated	Contracted Acres	Obligation Amount
Burt	16	834.10	\$204,030.00
Dakota	14	2,205.00	\$443,640.00
Douglas	2	319.00	\$ 29,030.00
Sarpy	13	716.80	\$144,416.00
Thurston	11	487.80	\$ 67,740.00
Washington	37	1,442.00	\$480,645.91
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>6,004.70</b>	<b>\$1,369,501.91</b>
	<b>1 Contract Pending that would bring total to:</b>		<b>\$1,400,000.00</b>

- Blair FO has completed 9 EQIP payments for \$63,311.03 (terrace systems); 6 EQIP payments for \$23,140.88 (ag waste systems); and paid 2 producers for reimbursement of Technical Service Provider \$31,586.63.
- Omaha FO completed 2 EQIP payments and 1 EQIP modification.
- Tekamah FO completed 2 EQIP terrace payments and modified 2 ag waste systems for payment.

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

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

- Dakota County submitted seeding bills on a completed restoration project.
- The following wetland activities occurred in the Tekamah FO: organized meeting for 11 producers and the surveyors, assisted WRP team with survey certifications, completed topographical survey for a WRP project and staked grass/tree establishment areas on another project.

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

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

- Blair FO completed a CRP contract for a field border.
- Dakota County prepared a contract for a 6.3 acre wetland restoration project through Continuous CRP.
- Walthill FO completed 14 grass filter strips and CRP seedings and turned in for Farm Service Agency (FSA) and NRD cost-share payments.
- Omaha FO completed 2 CCRP contracts: CP33 Quail Buffer for 6.3 acres and CP23 Wetland Restoration for 4.9 acres.
- Tekamah FO completed a CRP wetland restoration contract, CP3. Seven CRP contracts were revised due to changes in ownership and 2 contracts for inter-seeding legumes. Tekamah staff has also been completing preliminary eligibility determinations on a series of continuous grass filter strips.

## **SILVER CREEK WATERSHED**

- Tekamah FO has been researching an existing grade stabilization structure for the potential to do a rehab project.
- The Gerald Method grade stabilization structure, Site #42 in Burt County, was surveyed.

## **PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED**

- Olsson Associates performed additional soils investigation borings for Site #15 on May 3.
- EQIP applications for 2 additional P/J sites were approved. These include Site #18 and a landowner site within the watershed area. A total of 2 numbered sites and 3 landowner sites were approved for EQIP funding in the watershed project area this season.
- Neil Stockfleth, RC at Dakota City, presented information on the P/J projects to 9 members of the Leadership Dakota County group on May 17.
- Neil Stockfleth, Dakota City, conducted a survey of continuous no-till planting practices in the Site #15 watershed. The area is almost completely no-till planted again this year.

## **TRIBAL ASSISTANCE**

- Don Atkinson, Walthill, provided Bureau of Indian Affairs assistance with measuring residue and also assisted Benny Eagle, Winnebago Tribe, with plant identification.
- Teresa Murphy, NRD Programs Assistant in Walthill, assisted Lisa Whitewing with the Winnebago Tribal Housing Authority with information on steps in becoming a NeRain data collector for the area.

## **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 May. Articles included: Alternatives for Field Wet Spots, May is National Wetlands Month, Pesticide Container Recycling for Dakota and Thurston Counties, and Check Cross Connections to Ensure Safe Water Supply. Photos with captions were included of NRD technicians planting trees on a Dakota County farm, the newly repainted P-MRNRD rural water tower near Dakota City, and Blaine Gaer, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, presenting tree planting information to students at a South Sioux City elementary school.
- Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist at Omaha FO, assisted with “How Much Water in the World” at the Water Works Festival at Schram Park.

## **TRAINING/MEETINGS**

- Public meetings to hear comments on potential closure of the Dakota County FSA office were held in South Sioux City on May 3, and for NRCS consolidation on May 8. Kelly Fravel, Dakota City, presented information on the potential Dakota County FSA and NRCS consolidations to the South Sioux City Chamber of Commerce at their meeting on May 14.
- An NRCS engineering staff meeting was held in Omaha on May 31; those attending were Verlon Barnes, Mitch Keebler, Chuck Leinen and Sam Thomas.
- A Dakota County WRP restoration project was featured in the June issue of “Nebraska Farmer” magazine.
- Walthill FO staff participated in an organizational meeting via teleconference with Dan Gillespie, NRCS State No-Till Specialist. This was in anticipation for the “No-Till on the Plains” expo that will be held on July 18. Walthill FO staff generated lists of local newspapers, radio stations and television stations and provided them to Dan.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, June 13, 2007