

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ACTIVITY REPORT within the P-MRNRD
OCTOBER 2004

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Blair field office (FO) has received 44 CAP applications (\$185,000) for conservation practices in Washington County.
- Blair FO has 42 requests for the FY 2005 tree program in Washington County.
- Blair FO has received 3 SPORT applications for conservation practices in the Cunningham Lake Watershed.
- Walthill FO finished 8 terrace projects.
- Thurston County completed 1 certified wetland determination and processed a wetland appeal.
- One water and sediment control basin has been surveyed and designed for fall construction along with supporting grass waterways in Dakota County. Also a pasture pipeline and tank system has been completed, and NRCS staff, Vernon Dean, Mitch Keebler and Dennis Cady, have been surveying grade stabilization structure sites in Dakota County.
- One water and sediment control basin has been approved for cost share in Dakota County.

EQIP

- Jon Erwin's grade control structure in Omaha has been designed and specifications have been provided to the landowner. Construction will begin as soon as a contractor is selected.
- Mitch Keebler, CET Omaha, and Mike McCawley, NRCS State Geologist, completed the geological investigation on the Startzer's grade control site in Omaha. It was recommended that a rock riprap chute be constructed in place of the grade control structure. The chute will be designed this fall and constructed spring of 2005.
- Also, Mitch Keebler has met with Tim Haakenstad, NRCS Assistant State Engineer, to design the Sibbersen Farms grade control structure in Washington County. This structure will require a DNR permit and will be constructed spring or summer of 2005. This structure is in the design, planning and approval stage.
- Blair FO technical staff advises that construction has been completed on Robert Toebben's EQIP animal waste pit. Hidden Acres and Thomas Van Dyke EQIP grade stabilization structures have been designed and the landowners are securing bids. Troy Wakefield EQIP diversion/waterline is being surveyed, designed and planned by Les Smith and Lee Appleby, Technical Service Providers. Linda Ciurej EQIP grade stabilization structure is being reviewed for final design.
- Blair FO staff completed a contract modification on Kriete Farms EQIP contract to add funding for a Technical Service Provider.
- Walthill FO revised an EQIP contract to include a Technical Service Provider.
- Three pasture system projects and an irrigation conversion project are underway in Dakota County using EQIP funds
- An EQIP Work Group meeting will be held in Tekamah on November 30. The group will review practice list, ranking priorities, etc.

WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- Darlene Hensley, NRD Secretary Blair, and Les Smith, Technical Service Provider, compiled a list of landowners/producers associated with land located in the WREP project area in Washington County; 155 letters and information were mailed. Four responses have been received.
- An appraiser was in Dakota County to prepare appraisals on 11 parcels for WREP.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)

- Blair FO has 13 approved CRP applications for 622 acres in the general signup.
- Omaha FO has 3 approved CRP applications in the general signup.
- Blair FO has received 3 signups for CP33 Buffer Habitat in the Continuous CRP.
- Omaha FO has received 2 signups for CP33 Buffer Habitat in the Continuous CRP.
- Thirty-five bids were accepted for a total of 1,774 acres in Thurston County.
- Continuous CRP applications for grass waterways, filter strips and wetlands are being received and contracts are being completed in Dakota County.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- An advisory committee meeting was held on October 5, in Dakota City to review watershed progress; 23 people attended including 7 members of the advisory committee.
- One water and sediment control basin will be installed in the recreational site watershed this fall using CAP cost-share funds.
- Archeological site investigations are underway on sites 4, 5 and 9. The investigation has been completed on site 14.

SILVER CREEK WATERSHED

- Blair FO staff reports that construction has been completed on Silver Creek Site 32 and 33; fencing and seeding will be completed in November.

PERSONNEL

- Lynn Heng has been selected as District Conservationist for the Omaha office. Lynn was the City Administrator for Nebraska City. Previous to that he served as the General Manager and Assistant General Manager for Nemaha NRD from 1994 to 2002. Earlier in Lynn's career he worked for the Soil Conservation Service as a Soil Conservationist in several positions. Lynn is also a Major in the Nebraska Army National Guard with 17 years experience including a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot. He is currently Commander of the 24th Medical Company and is responsible for 140 personnel. In 2002 Lynn received the Nebraska Land Improvement Contractors Association's Outstanding NRD Leadership award. Lynn is a proven leader who is passionate about conservation and natural resources.
- Vacancy announcements for the resource conservationist position in Tekamah and CET position in South Sioux City have closed. Selections are anticipated within the next week.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- 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 October. The news items were: Students Attend 6th Grade Conservation Day, Importance of Cultural Resources, Can Buffers Boost Your Bottom Line, and RC&D Annual Meeting Held in South Sioux City. Photos with captions were included of a livestock system waterline being installed on the Lorn Beardshear farm, Stan Riggles and Don Atkinson conducting

an archeological investigation in Pigeon/Jones Watershed, and of students at the 6th grade conservation day.

- NRCS and NRD staff participated in the 6th Grade Conservation Day at Summit Lake.
- Neil Jensen located the GEOCAGE BOX for the Washington County Extension Service with the NRCS GPS unit.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- District employees worked on Towantonga marker near Homer – hauled in dirt, disked and seeded.
- District employees conducted fall inspections of Tekamah Mud and Silver Creek structures.

DAKOTA COUNTY SERVICE CENTER

- The site has been cleared of both buildings and excavation is underway for the building footings. Unconsolidated soil conditions were encountered requiring additional excavation and replacement of foundation material before footings can be installed.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Neil Jensen, NRCS Blair, and Robert Hall, NRCS Omaha, attended two Cunningham Lake Technical Advisory Team meetings.
- NRCS staff attended Ephemeral Gully Erosion training.
- Kelly Fravel attended a South Sioux City tree board meeting on October 12.
- NRD staff attended a water training workshop.
- Neil Stockfleth and Vernon Dean, NRCS South Sioux City, attended an erosion control workshop held in Norfolk on October 21.

Reported by: Lynn Heng, District Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, November 16, 2004



From the Coordinator...

Monthly Report from the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance for the period of Oct 1 through Nov 1, 2004

Rodney L. Verhoeff, Coordinator

Cumulative Impact Study (CIS) - GIS Working Group The CIS - GIS Working Group met on November 3rd, 2004 at the LPNNRD in Wahoo. This subgroup of the full CIS partner group met to discuss data acquisition needs and costs. Since several members were unable to attend the last GIS meeting, it also allowed for a discussion of the recently-developed Scope of Work (SOW) for the project. The projected timeframe is to complete PHASE I - Scoping and have a final SOW by December 31st, 2004. The entire CIS group will meet on November 23rd at the LPNNRD at 10:00 a.m.

International Erosion Control Association (IECA) Great River Chapter Annual Conference On October 27th and 28th, along with several other LPSNRD and PMRNRD employees attended the 2004 IECA annual conference in Council Bluffs. The conference looked at low-impact development and erosion control basics including natural resources based planning. Day 1 included a great presentation on sediment and erosion control (and the difference between the two), commonly-use practices, new innovations, natural resource based planning including the use of GIS and greenway planning, marketing of control practices and how to highlight the importance of these controls, and education/training for professional, boards, and the public. Day 2 included information on NPDES permitting and the regulatory perspective, basics of Best Management Practices (BMPs), and finally site tours demonstrating many of the techniques and control measures from the presentations.

Strategic Plan for Environmental Education in Nebraska Headed up by the statewide - Nebraska Association of Conservation and Environment Education (NACEE), a strategic plan for environmental education in Nebraska is currently being developed. The plan looks at helping get more environmental education in our schools, providing opportunities for formal and non-formal instructors, providing better access to resources, linking environmental educators, increasing support and funding, and developing standards for curriculum. I was involved in this process when I served as Executive Director of the Niobrara Council and was asked to look through the draft strategic plan as part of the public input component of the process. Education is a huge part of the LPRCA and the many activities we are engaged in, so I am very pleased to be setting precedence for Nebraska by assisting with the effort.

Sarpy County Planning Process October 26th, 2004, I participated in a focus group to assist with updating Sarpy County's Comprehensive Development Plan and Zoning Ordinance. This process goes hand-in-hand with the recent infrastructure study initiated in Sarpy County to address water supply and wastewater needs in the area. With a large predicted growth rate in the area, the county is looking to address development issues before they become a problem and assure adequate infrastructure, appropriate development, continued economic development, and sustainability of natural resources. Once a draft of the updated plan is developed, we will again convene in focus groups to discuss.

Lower Platte Weed Management Weed Area (LPWMA) Group The LPWMA Grants Committee met on November 4th, 2004 at the LPSNR to discuss the next round of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Foundation PTI grants. Last round, the group received around \$54,000 to help control noxious weeds in the Lower Platte River drainage. This year, the group is looking for another \$50,000 to continue these efforts. For this new grant, the group is looking at developing considerable more educational and outreach materials in addition to contracting with a helicopter pilot to spray weeds. We have until December to submit the grant application. Those who received funds previously have a good chance of receiving more. IN the spring, the LPWMA may be approaching the NRDs and other partners to look for continued support.

Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Watershed Management Course On October 8th, I attended a daylong course looking at stream rehabilitation management and techniques. The course covered topics such as stream morphology, looking for signs of problems, erosion and sediment transport, and control measures. Following the classroom portion, we took a field trip to view these control measures in place throughout Lincoln, including a recently-completed stream rehabilitation on Beal Slough.

Recent & Upcoming NRD and Alliance Meetings:

- ✓ **NEXT LPRCA QUARTERLY MEETING** - Tuesday, November 30th, 2004* 9:30 a.m. * LPNNRD Office near Wahoo.
- ✓ **LPNNRD Board Meeting** - Monday, Nov 8th, 2004 *5:30 p.m. - Saunders Co Fairgrounds - Wahoo
- ✓ **LPSNRD Board Meeting** - Wednesday, Nov 17th, 2004 * 7:00 p.m. - LPSNRD Office - Lincoln @ 3125 Portia Street
- ✓ **PMRNRD Board Meeting** - Thursday, Nov 18th, 2004 * 8:00 p.m. - Nat Res Center @ Chalco Hills Rec Area - Omaha