

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ACTIVITY REPORT
OCTOBER 2007

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Blair Field Office (FO) staff completed 3 conservation plans, and Neil Jensen, RC, completed 7 Highly Erodible Land (HEL) determinations due to tract splits.
- Blair FO has received 84 CAP (Conservation Assistance Program) and EQIP applications for fall conservation work. Payments have been made on 4 NRD practices and 3 EQIP practices for \$70,517.
- Blair FO staff completed 29 reconstitutions, updated case files, Toolkit and tracking.
- Darlene Hensley, NRD Programs Assistant at Blair, mailed 28 tree order packets requested by landowners.
- Omaha FO completed 2 conservation plans and completed 6 HEL determinations.
- Tekamah FO updated a plan for a producer that will be converting CRP acres back to cropland. They also worked with a producer to measure stream flow for a grant application to produce electricity with stream flow as the power source.
- Tekamah FO approved the Orval Fleschman CAP payment for terraces.
- Justin Linder, RC at Tekamah, completed 2 HEL determinations.
- NRCS staff from Omaha and Dakota City spent 2 days surveying 3 dam sites in Dakota County.
- Dakota County staff members are working with a landowner and the County Road Department to reduce runoff and sedimentation from a minimum maintenance road near Homer.
- Dakota County prepared a brush management CAP payment application.
- Walthill FO has 3 fall CAP projects approved.
- Walthill FO staff completed 7 HEL determinations and 4 certified wetland determinations. Field work was conducted on 3 other wetland determinations.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

- Tekamah FO put together cost-share estimates for producers wanting to implement conservation practices; approximately 10 estimates have been mailed.
- Justin Linder, RC at Tekamah, designed a grade stabilization structure to be completed this fall for his first dam design.
- Tekamah FO made payments on Irrigation Water Management practices for 2 EQIP contracts, certified the TSP payments on an Animal Waste Facility for 2 EQIP contracts and certified Nutrient Management and Waste Utilization for 1 EQIP contract.
- Dakota County has a swine waste storage facility completed and ready for payment.
- Dakota County prepared an application for payment on a brush management project and 2 irrigation water management projects.
- Blair FO staff mailed 33 EQIP postcards to landowners and producers advising them of the incentive payments that are available for FY2008. Blair has received 11 signed EQIP applications for FY2008 conservation practices.
- All offices within the P-MRNRD continue to promote the 2008 EQIP signup period.
- Walthill completed 1 payment and staked 5 terrace projects.
- Walthill FO staff generated an EQIP fact sheet for the Winnebago agency.

WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- One new WRP application has been processed at the Tekamah FO.
- Dakota County received an application for a 40-acre parcel adjacent to the Blyburg complex; they prepared an application for payment for earthwork and seeding on a nearly completed restoration project near Dakota City.
- Bids are being solicited for signs to highlight wetland restoration projects in Burt and Dakota Counties.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)

- Justin Linder, Tekamah, has been working with the TSP Forester to schedule direct tree seeding (planting nuts instead of tree seedlings).
- Walthill FO completed 1 filter strip Conservation Plan of Operations and mailed out for signatures.
- Walthill FO staff met with Clayton Stalling, Amber Schroeder (both from Nebraska Game & Parks Commission) and Everett Moore (Farm Service Agency) regarding a wellhead plan.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- Staff prepared an updated map of the watershed detailing the status of the watershed structure sites.

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP)

- Dakota County prepared an application for payment for a chemical brush management practice on 15 acres. This was a follow-up practice to mechanical clearing accomplished in 2006.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- Walthill NRD FO staff worked on structure maintenance, rural water line and assisted in the survey of a Pigeon/Jones structure.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Walthill FO staff secured GPS points on an allotment and generated a map of the area for Jason McCauley (BIA).

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- NRCS and NRD staff from each field office were involved in the Regional FFA Land Judging Contest held October 10, in Burt County.
- NRCS and NRD staff also assisted with 6th grade Conservation Field Day held at Summit Lake in Burt County; approximately 240 students attended.
- The Dakota City FO staff provided news items for the NRD Share Page published in the Dakota County Star for the month of October. Articles included: Conservation and Wetland Funds Available Soon; Dakota County's Unique Landscapes; and Sixth Grade Students Attend Field Day. Photos with captions were included of a recently installed livestock watering tank near Willis; sixth grade students attending the Conservation Field Day near Tekamah; and FFA members participating in the regional land judging contest in Burt County.
- Clayton Stalling and Amber Schroeder from the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission scheduled a stop in Dakota County to review the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project and the Biologically Unique Landscapes located within the county with NRCS staff members.

- Staff at Dakota City arranged for an airplane flight of Dakota County on October 19, to photograph the large amount of water standing on the Missouri River floodplain. Photos of a variety of other conservation practices were recorded during the flight.
- Blair FO NRD staff published a news release in the Blair Enterprise reminding landowners that “Autumn is the Best Time to Prepare for Spring Tree Planting”.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Justin Linder, Tekamah, attended the Range Forum held in Grand Island.
- NRCS staff members from each field office participated in a teleconference on the “Practice Payment Incentive Payments” for the new incentive payments that producers will receive through EQIP and other programs.
- Kelly Fravel, Dakota City, attended the South Sioux City tree board meeting.
- Janet Thomas, Dakota City, took part in the Survey Engineering Tool computer drafting training in Norfolk.
- The monthly Resource Conservationist meeting was held in Dakota County in October; a tour of recently installed conservation practices was conducted as part of the meeting.
- Blair FO staff, Neil Jensen, NRCS, Terry Schumacher, NRD, and Marty Thieman, NRD, attended Test Your Well Water Workshop October 29, sponsored by the Groundwater Foundation and Cargill Inc.
- Each field office participated in the “Practice Payment Schedule” net meeting (revised cost-share method).

OTHER & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Andy Bohnenkamp, Tekamah, spent time finishing his duties as an Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator with completing field office reports and submitting reports to finalize the hours of volunteer work this last year.
- Justin Linder, Resource Conservationist (RC) at Tekamah, has been selected and has accepted the RC position in Pawnee City; he will officially be moving and starting in his new position December 10. While he knows this will put a heavy workload to be completed by Andy and Evelyn, along with the rest of the NRCS staff in the NRD, he is taking this career change to be closer to family, farming operation, and the airplane. He wishes each and everyone the best luck and wants to take the time to appreciate the great experience and opportunity of working with each staff member and being able to serve the producers in Burt County and in the Papio-Missouri River and Lower Elkhorn NRDs. He will be around for the next month and will continue to complete and promote conservation till the last day in the office.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, November 6, 2007