

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

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Tekamah field office had requests for 77 Wetland Determinations and 30 HEL Determinations for FY03.
- Blair field office has completed 36 HEL/Wetland Determination/ASCS-569 requests for FY03.
- South Sioux City received 22 HEL Determinations; 19 were completed.
- In September, construction of conservation practices in Washington and adjacent counties was hampered due to a lack of adequate soil moisture. NRCS/NRD technical staff examined each construction site to assess soil moisture prior to giving contractor the go ahead.
- Blair field office has approved 20 conservation applications for fall 2003; 5 applications are pending. Burt County has received 18 fall applications for terraces, and 2 fall terrace projects for 10,425 feet have been surveyed. Three terrace projects were completed in Thurston County.
- Site assessments for 11 grade control structures in the P-MRNRD were conducted in September. Nine structures in the Papio Creek Watershed, including Turtle Creek Watershed Site 2, and Tekamah-Mud Creek Site 6-2, were completed. The assessment team members consist of NRCS State Office staff, the Omaha NRCS Engineering staff and Ron Lehman, NRD Superintendent for Operations and Maintenance. A formal report will be forwarded to the District on the results of each site assessment. The project is being completed in conjunction with the Watershed Rehabilitation Program for consideration of potential sites.

EQIP

- Construction has begun on Roger Mathiesen's EQIP grade stabilization structure in Washington County (estimated cost \$50,000). The site inspectors are NRCS Jim Kennedy, Omaha CET, and Ralph Arauza, Blair SCT.
- Nine existing EQIP contracts expired September 30, 2003 with all of the required structures and management practices completed in Burt County.
- September 30, was the deadline to have contracts completed for EQIP applications approved for funding. Following is a list of approvals by county.

Practices	Thurston	Burt	Washington	Sarpy/Douglas
Animal Feeding Operations	\$74,618 (1)			
Terraces		\$23,371 (1)	\$22,817 (1)	\$16,235 (1)
Grade Control Structures		\$95,129 (5)	\$34,007 (1)	\$35,958 (3)
Pasture	\$25,050 (3)	\$12,879 (2)	\$9,256 (1)	
Nutrient/Pest Management				\$1,660 (1)
Irrigation			\$13,469 (1)	\$17,615 (1)
TOTALS	\$99,668 (4)	\$131,379 (8)	\$79,549 (4)	\$71,468 (6)

SILVER CREEK WATERSHED

- Terry Schumacher, NRD Field Representative at Blair, assisted NRD interns with Global Positioning System (GPS) training at several Silver Creek sites in Burt County.
- Terry Schumacher and Mitch Keebler, NRCS CET Omaha, worked on Silver Creek Watershed sites #15 and #19 to be built in 2004.
- Lee Appleby, NRCS Tekamah, conducted 4 cultural resource inspections on the Silver Creek structures planned for this year.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- The bioengineering team evaluated 2 applications in Burt County and 1 in Douglas County. Of the 3 sites visited, only 1 site, approximately 7 acres in Burt County in the Missouri River Valley, was ranked because of restoration potential.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

- CRP offers received during General CRP signup #26 were evaluated based on the summary score of 5 environmental factors and cost. 4.1 million acres were offered with only 2.0 million acres being accepted for program year 2004 or 2005. Approximately 1.6 million acres from existing contracts will expire September 30, 2003 with 0.7 million acres continuing with new contracts. Approved offers were required to have contracts completed by September 30, 2003. Following is a listing of contracts approved for each county.

County	No. of Contracts	Acres
Dakota	1	129.1
Thurston	40	2,292.7
Burt	14	690.0
Washington	9	207.4
Sarpy/Douglas	<u>21</u>	<u>609.0</u>
Totals	85	3,928.2

- Blair field office received 18 applications for managed haying and grazing on 297 CRP acres; South Sioux City field office received 17 requests.
- Three continuous contracts were completed in Thurston County.
- Omaha field office completed 37 CREP and 3 continuous contracts on 358.5 acres.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- Construction is progressing on the Pigeon/Jones Creek Structure #3 northwest of Hubbard.
- The inventory and evaluation process for P/J Creek Structure #5 (scheduled for September 10) was rescheduled to a later date due to 6-1/2 inches of rain that fell in the area.
- Waiting for a COE 404 permit for P/J Creek site #14 before proceeding with construction.
- Follow-up with landowners and operators is ongoing.

WATER QUALITY

- Douglas/Sarpy Counties abandoned 2 wells; received 3 new applications; 6 well applications are pending.
- Washington County abandoned 2 wells; received 4 new applications; 15 well applications are pending.
- Dakota County has 8 well applications pending.
- Burt County has 5 well applications pending.
- Thurston County received 1 new application; 2 well applications are pending.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Dennis Cady and Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, surveyed numerous terrace projects for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Thurston County.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- A new NRD employee has started working in the Tekamah field office. Steve Walker will be working out of the Tekamah office with his primary focus being on promotion of federal programs such as WRP, EQIP, WHIP, CRP and GRP within Washington, Burt and Thurston counties. The part-time position is possible through a contribution agreement between NRCS and the P-MRNRD.
- Lee Appleby and Andy Bohnenkamp, NRCS Tekamah, assisted with the Annual Sixth Grade Conservation Days at Summit Lake.
- Jenny Sundberg, NRCS Tekamah, assisted with the site setup for Range Judging in the Lower Elkhorn NRD.
- The South Sioux City staff provided news items and photos with captions for the NRD Share Page published in the Dakota Star (name changed from South Sioux City Star) for the month of September. The news items were: Additional EQIP Funds Available, Fall Weed Control, Nebraska Loess Hills RC&D's 100th Project, and the RC&D's Ink Cartridge and Cell Phone Recycling Program. The photos with captions were: Rain Gauge drawing winner sponsored by the P-MRNRD at the Dakota/Thurston County Fair, the P-MRNRD Board to Dakota City for September Board meeting and Jensen Construction working at P/J Creek dam site #3.

MEETINGS

- Terry Schumacher, NRD Field Representative in Blair, attended the NARD Conference in Kearney.

DISTRICT INFORMATION

- Denny Piper and Rod Kinning, NRD staff at Walthill, conducted maintenance activities on Pigeon/Jones Creek and Silver Creek structures.

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

Cc: Ken Noonan, ASTC/FO, NRCS, Lincoln
RH:le:Activity Report