

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ACTIVITY REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2007

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Blair Field Office (FO) staff completed 11 conservation plans, and Neil Jensen, RC, completed 1 wetland determination and 10 Highly Erodible Land (HEL) determinations.
- Blair FO has 6 miscellaneous cost-share applications for P-MRNRD FY2008. The applications include 42 acres of seeding for pasture renovation and cropland conversions.
- Blair FO has received 50 CAP (Conservation Assistance Program) applications for fall 2007 and 41 EQIP co-pay applications. The total is 91 CAP/EQIP applications for \$595,000. Blair FO staff expects to receive approximately 5 to 10 additional applications for CAP Fall conservation work.
- Blair FO staff completed 27 reconstitutions, updated case files and tracking.
- Blair FO Darlene Hensley assisted the Omaha office with file and reconstitution procedures.
- Dakota County has 8 pasture practice installation projects with pipelines, tanks, fences and brush management being implemented; they also received construction plan approval and installation permits for a dam.
- Engineering staff members from Lincoln and Omaha spent 2 days conducting pre-design site visits on 11 proposed dam sites in Dakota County.
- Walthill FO processed 2 CAP projects for payment; they have approved 5 CAP applications for fall construction.
- Tekamah FO staff completed 4 wetland determinations and 3 HEL determinations.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

- Blair FO received 2 signed applications and 8 requests for 2008 EQIP conservation practices – pending field visits by technical staff and landowner signatures.
- Blair FO staff mailed 200 EQIP postcards and Walthill FO mailed 980 to landowners and producers advising them of the cost share that is available for next year.
- Dakota County prepared an application for payment on an irrigation conversion project, and received 3 applications for 2008 EQIP.
- All counties are actively promoting the 2008 EQIP signup period.
- Walthill FO completed 1 EQIP payment; they also staked 4 EQIP terrace projects.
- Tekamah FO made 3 payments on EQIP contracts.
- Justin Linder, Tekamah, met with the BIA along with other staff to help on grazing issues that have developed on BIA ground.

WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- Wetland team members visited Dakota County to review the restoration plans on 2 WRP projects. Dakota County had 2 WRP options signed for a total of 425 acres.
- Bids are being solicited for signs to highlight wetland restoration projects in Burt, Dakota and several other counties.
- Frank Timperely (WRP construction in Burt County) is still in the construction process.

PL-566 REHABILITATION

- A geologic investigation and pool survey was conducted by NRCS staff from Iowa and Nebraska during the first week of October on Site W-3 of the Papio Creek Watershed in Washington County. The purpose of these investigations was to gather soils engineering data for the rehabilitation of the structure scheduled for design this year.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)

- In Thurston County, 2 CCRP contracts were generated and 1 CCRP waterway project submitted for payment.
- Thurston County received 3 CRP applications for wetland restorations and 1 application for a grass filter strip.
- Tekamah completed contracts for 3 new CCRP contracts (2 riparian buffers, 1 filter strip). They also finalized 4 contracts for Farm Service Agency (FSA).

SILVER CREEK WATERSHED

- Review has been completed by NRCS/NRD staff on Silver Creek projects that producers have requested.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- The P-MRNRD approved a contract with Olsson Associates for the final design and plan preparation for the recreational structure site and park near Hubbard, Site #15.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- Blair FO assisted Washington County Rural Water customers with water payments and meter readings.
- Dennis Cady, NRD Walthill, attended the Grade IV Water Operator's License training.
- Denny Piper, NRD Walthill, assisted with the scrap tire collection in West Point.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Walthill FO personnel, Sam Thomas (Dakota City), Chuck Leinen (Omaha), and Tekamah FO staff made field visits with Jason McCauley (BIA), to 2 allotments. Gully erosion in pastures was observed and engineering suggestions given.
- Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, completed a plan for a pasture allotment.
- NRCS staff, Don Atkinson, Verlon Barnes, Justin Linder, Andy Bohnenkamp, Leroy Stokes (NRCS State Office) and his state office water resources staff team members met with Omaha tribal council to discuss North and South Blackbird Creek rapid watershed assessment. Andy Baker, BIA, was also in attendance. Omaha tribal council emphasized getting some conservation practices on land and not just another study or assessment.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Terry Schumacher, NRD Blair, assisted with the Pheasants Forever Youth Mentor Hunt; 18 hunters and their mentors attended.
- The Dakota City FO staff provided news items for the NRD Share Page published in the Dakota County Star for the month of September. Articles included: EQIP Applications Accepted Until December; Pigeon Jones Creek Site #15 Gets The Go Ahead; Fall Weed Control Critical; Scrap Tire Collection A Success. Photos with captions were included of a pasture watering system pipeline being installed near Jackson; the Papio-Missouri River NRD Board Meeting held in Dakota City; and the Nebraska Loess Hills RC&D Tire Collection Day held at West Point.

- Justin Linder and Andy Bohnenkamp, NRCS Tekamah, have been working with Patrick Cowsert, NRCS Resource Soil Scientist, for the upcoming Land Judging Contest in Burt County.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Ralph Arauza, NRCS Blair, attended the No-Till Program Training in Lincoln.
- Vernon Dean, NRCS Dakota City, received conservation planner recertification in September.
- Kelly Fravel, NRD Dakota City, enrolled in the 2008 Leadership Dakota County course which meets monthly and exposes participants to leadership development topics.
- The P-MRNRD annual picnic dinner and meeting were held in Dakota City on September 13.
- Dakota County's Farm Service Agency is slated to close at the end of the year. The County Executive Director was reassigned on September 14, to Cass County.
- Neil Stockfleth, NRCS Dakota City, reviewed a plan completed by Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, and reviewed a plan completed by Blaine Gaer, NRCS Walthill, for planning recertification.
- Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, Denny Piper, NRD Walthill, Justin Linder, NRCS Tekamah, and Neil Stockfleth, NRCS Dakota City, attended a Soil Quality Workshop.
- Walthill FO staff, Don Atkinson, Denny Piper and Dennis Cady, attended the annual NRD supper at Vince Kramper's farmstead.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, October 10, 2007