

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

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- Blair field office (FO) has received 13 applications for fall conservation practices and 17 requests for FY2005 Tree Program.
- Walthill FO received 3 terrace cost-share applications; 3 terrace projects enrolled in Lands for Conservation were completed.
- Seven certified wetland determinations were completed in Thurston County.
- Thirteen HEL determinations and 7 certified wetland determinations were completed in Burt County.
- Eleven conservation compliance plans were revised in Burt County in order to meet conservation compliance provisions. These tracts were granted variances for crop year 2004 and will all be added to the 2005 status review list.
- Burt County has 13 terrace projects to be staked this fall; 1 summer terrace project was built.

EQIP

- Blair FO staff reports that construction has begun on Toebben's EQIP animal waste facility. Also, construction has begun on 2 animal waste systems in Thurston County.
- Blair FO staff reports that construction has been completed on Teager's EQIP erosion control structure; the practice also included a small diversion.
- Construction of an EQIP grade control structure in Sarpy County that included seeding, mulching and fencing was completed.
- All contracts for 2004 have been signed by producers and approved by the District Conservationist, Don Doty. Approved contracts by county: Douglas – 4; Washington – 7; Burt – 9; Thurston – 4; Dakota – 7.
- Payment applications were completed for 2 grade control structures (both in Silver Creek) and 1 livestock watering system within Burt County.
- One grade control structure was completed in Burt County (not a Silver Creek structure).
- Burt County has 2 terrace projects that will be completed this fall using 2003 EQIP funds.

WETLAND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (WREP)

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- Neil Jensen, RC at Blair, and the Wetland Team looked at 2 potential wetland sites in Washington County and 1 in Douglas County (2 WREP and 1 WRP). Omaha FO, Robert Hall, RC, Chuck Leinen, Engineer, and Patrick Cowser, Soil Scientist, were also present.
- Eight applications encompassing approximately 950 acres in Dakota County have been received for the WREP program. Four more applications are pending. The WREP team will be in Dakota County at the end of August to conduct field reviews of the offered parcels.
- The Bioengineering Team reviewed 11 Burt County potential sites for WREP; 10 of these sites were competitively ranked and submitted to the NRCS state office for further review and to begin the process of getting appraisals completed.
- Burt County has received 4 new applications for possible wetland restoration projects; 1 WRP and 3 WREP sites.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)

- Blair FO has completed CRP/CCRP payments for 16.1 acres of grasses on filter strips and field borders.
- Earthwork is underway on a 12-acre wetland restoration project in Dakota County. Eighteen requests for haying and grazing of CRP parcels have been received.
- Omaha FO conducted a field visit to determine feasibility of grass filter strips; also, 6 CAP applications for CRP seeding on 130 acres were completed.
- Walthill FO revised several CRP contracts.
- Walthill FO revised the current CRP soil rental rates resulting in all 6 soil categories receiving an additional \$5.00 per acre.
- Burt County processed 8 CRP payment applications.
- Four new CCRP and 3 new waterways were evaluated for eligibility in Burt County. All of these projects will be staked for seeding this fall after harvest.

WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (WHIP)

- Blair FO submitted 1 WHIP application consisting of a pond and wildlife seeding.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- Land rights maps have been prepared and COE 404 permits have been submitted for sites 5 and 14.

SILVER CREEK WATERSHED

- Blair FO held the pre-construction meeting for Sites 32 and 33. Terry Schumacher, NRD Blair, and Mitch Keebler, NRCS Omaha, conducted the meeting. Don Doty and Chuck Leinen, Omaha NRCS staff, Craig Glup of Glup Construction (contractor) and Mike Munson from the Department of Natural Resources also attended.
- Construction on Silver Creek Sites 32 and 33 has started; both sites have been cleared in preparation for construction.

WATER QUALITY

- Douglas/Sarpy Counties have 10 applications pending.
- Washington County has 11 applications pending.
- Dakota County has 1 application pending.
- Burt County has 2 applications pending.
- Thurston County has 4 applications pending.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- Blair FO NRCS staff assisted FSA staff with an Informational Booth at the Washington County Fair.
- 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 August. The news items were: Conservation Reserve Program General Signup, Scenic Byway, and the Pesticide Container Recycling. Photos with captions were included of Pesticide Container Recycling and Shredding, Landowner with Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Wetland Restoration Project, and Landowner with Clayton Stalling, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), reviewing plans for NGPC Landowner Incentives Program contract.
- Jenny Sundberg, RC Tekamah, wrote a letter of recommendation for the Burt County Chapter of Pheasants Forever as part of a Nebraska Environmental Trust grant application requesting funding to purchase a no-till drill.

DAKOTA COUNTY SERVICE CENTER

- The NRD advertised for construction bids during August with the bid opening to be held on August 31; there has been a substantial amount of interest by contractors in this project.

PERSONNEL

- Jeremiah Schutz, an employee with Game & Parks at Schilling Wildlife Area, is volunteering at the Omaha FO one day a week.

TRAINING/MEETINGS

- Blair FO staff completed Security Awareness Training.
- Robert Hall, RC Omaha, attended the Cunningham Lake Watershed Council meeting.
- Blaine Gaer, NRCS Walthill, attended a no-till meeting.

TRIBAL ASSISTANCE

- Dennis Cady, NRCS Walthill, consulted with Jason McCauley, BIA, regarding the need for terraces included in a BIA conservation plan.
- Don Atkinson, NRCS Walthill, visited with Wolfgang Brandner, Tribal Program Coordinator for EPA, concerning technical assistance that NRCS could provide the Omaha Tribe.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha, September 1, 2004