

# Insight

Nemaha Natural Resources District

## Nemaha NRD Celebrates 50 Years!



### From the Manager's Desk...

50 years!!!! Happy anniversary to the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts. In 1972 the NRD's were formed by Legislative Bill 1357 that was passed by the Nebraska State Legislature as a catch all for many different boards and committees (157 to be exact) including the Mosquito Abatement Board and Drainage districts to name a few. In 50 years, there have been lots of changes in farming practices, state government agencies and federal as well, but the NRD's have remained mostly unchanged.

At the Nemaha NRD we have taken storm water runoff and conservation as main priorities. Over the past 50 plus years the Nemaha NRD along with help from the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), has built over 460 watershed dams and grade control structures, along with countless miles of terraces, and acres of grass water ways. Statewide the 23 NRD's combined have planted over 100,000,000 trees. Yes, you read that correctly One Hundred Million trees! We have also established 5 Recreation areas, 3 having RV and tent camping sites, playgrounds, walking and hiking trails. They offer great fishing opportunities, swimming on the beaches and the lakes are a fun place to get out in a Canoe, Kayak, or boat. If you enjoy getting out and putting miles on a bicycle we have one of the most

scenic bike trails, about 23 miles long, in the state. The Steamboat Trace trail runs from just south of Nebraska City to a few miles south of Brownville. The trail showcases the sights and sounds of the Missouri river bottom along with an opportunity to see some rare carvings just south of Peru that were carved into the sandstone over 50 years ago by a local artist named Rollie Sherman. We welcome everyone to come check out all the things that the NRD's have to offer.

In the short time that the NRD's have been in existence I would say that we have made so many accomplishments, and I look forward to all the things that can be accomplished in the next 50 years.



Photo showing erosion in the Long Branch Watershed



Photo showing erosion in the Long Branch Watershed

### Steamboat Trace

Progress is being made to reopen the 2019 flood damaged portion of the Steamboat Trace Trail from two miles south of Peru to Brownville. The damaged section has been closed for over three years due to uncertainty with the repairs of the Peru levee and the increased risk for flooding to re-occur.

Contractors moved in this spring to begin delivering screenings (the surfacing material on the trail) and clearing trees and debris to allow delivery trucks safe passage.

All necessary maintenance was completed on the open portion of the trail in time to host one of the routes for the 2022 Radler Bike Festival. The Radler Bike Festival is an annual event hosted by the Arbor Day Farm and has grown to include hundreds of cyclists!

The south most portion of the trail (2 miles south of Peru to Brownville) continues to be closed due to unsafe surfacing conditions. The contractor continues to make progress, as weather conditions allow, to reopen the trail in its entirety. Flood damages to the trail included; trail surfacing being washed away, portions of the trail caving off, elevation changes, culvert loss or plugging, and levee damages.

The Nemaha NRD would like to thank all the trail users for your patience in getting the necessary repairs completed! Please continue to check our website at [www.nemahanrd.org/recreation/steamboat-trace](http://www.nemahanrd.org/recreation/steamboat-trace) for the latest updates and remember to stay out of the closed portions of the trail.

As a reminder, absolutely no ATVs or UTVs are allowed on the trail. If you see improper usage of the trail report the incident immediately to the area conservation officer or local law enforcement.

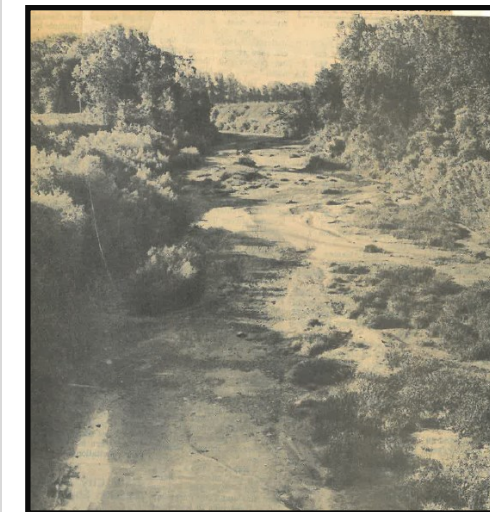


Insight is a publication of the Nemaha NRD. Requests to be placed upon the Insight mailing list and/or comments regarding information in this publication should be directed to Ashley Rippe at 62161 Hwy 136 Tecumseh, NE 68450 or at [arippe@nemahanrd.org](mailto:arippe@nemahanrd.org). To view the newsletter in color please submit your email address as indicated above or visit our website [www.nemahanrd.org](http://www.nemahanrd.org)

Summer 2022

### 45 Years Ago...

About this time 45 years ago the Falls City Journal reported the North Fork of the Nemaha River was bone dry. "For what is believed to be the first time ever, the North Fork of the Nemaha River is not running a stream of water at Salem. There was a trickle of water Tuesday morning, but by evening, the river was dry." - July 6, 1977



### Chemigation Time

Chemigators located in Zone 1 or with a new permit—please call Ken Hatten at the Nemaha NRD at 402-335-3325 to schedule your required chemigation inspection.

The Nemaha NRD chemization "Zone 1" is located north of Highway 136 and west of Highway 50. Surrounding towns include Sterling, Adams, Firth, Panama, Douglas, Bennet, Palmyra, Unadilla, Syracuse and Burr.

As a reminder, chemigation inspections must be completed PRIOR to applying any product through the pivot. The NRD is encouraging producers and applicators to be proactive in getting inspections done. There is a large quantity of sites to visit this year. When product needs to go on you don't want to have to be waiting to complete your inspection.



### Tree Planting Season Wraps Up



1970s: Betty Vermeer, George Ullsperger, & Gerald Hubka plant trees at Iron Horse Lake



2022: Mark McDonald, Tomas Chalè Akè, Caden Rush, Payton Beckman, & Ken Hatten plant trees for a landowner.

As the old saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" Not a lot has changed in the world of machine tree planting since the inception of the NRDs. The machines used to plant trees in the 1970's are strikingly similar to those used today. The simple setup allows a small crew to plant hundreds of trees each day. One person drives the tractor. Another rides on the back of the planter and places each tree into a furrow created by a blade. Spacing is measured

using a marked chain that is pulled behind the planter. Packing wheels follow behind the furrow. 2 or 3 other employees follow up to ensure the tree isn't angled and finish packing the soil around the roots.

This spring the Nemaha NRD sold 14,305 trees and shrubs. Of those, about 8,000 were machine planted by NRD staff.

If you are interested in a windbreak or wild-life planting reach out to Mark McDonald to get on his schedule for fall site visits.



# Watershed of Wonders Camp



June 15, 2022

After a COVID induced hiatus the biennial "Watershed of Wonders" day camp was back this year and for the first time, was held at Duck Creek Recreation Area! Seventy, ten to twelve year olds from all across the Nemaha Natural Resources District (NNRD) participated in archery, fisheries education, fishing, boat safety, a boat

ride, the amazing water race, water rockets, and a hayrack ride. Mother nature could not have been more accommodating with the forecast. It was 100 degrees earlier in the week, but the day of Watershed of Wonders temperatures were much cooler, there was a breeze, and the sky was overcast. This was particularly helpful with the limited amount of shade at Duck Creek Recreation Area.

Watershed of Wonders tries to introduce area children to new experiences, or build on those they already had, while providing them with some education about the resources the NNRD is here to protect. A lot of kids mentioned they were able to try



something for the first time. The fish were biting like crazy in the morning, allowing almost every single kid to catch a fish.

The event is truly all hands on deck for NNRD staff and would not happen without a large number of volunteers! Forty-six staff and volunteers helped to make the event possible along with generous contributions from area businesses and individuals. It is safe to say that the volunteers might have gone home more tired than the kids! The next Watershed of Wonders camp will be held in 2024.



## Toxic Algae Alerts

With summer finally here and temperatures climbing, it is important that visitors to Nemaha NRD lakes be cautious about toxic blue green algae. Harmful algal blooms can cause people, especially children, and ani-

mals to get very sick. Water sampling is done each week to provide park goers information on water conditions, Every Monday during the summer water samples are collected at the NRD's public swimming areas for testing. Results are available by that Friday on the NRD's website or at Nebraska Department of Environment and

## Reducing Erosion

The Nemaha NRD along with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources set aside just under \$200,000 in 2021 to go toward projects that will reduce erosion on private agricultural land. Additional funds will be set aside this fiscal year through the Soil and Water Conservation Program (SWCP) once the NRD's budget is finalized.

SWCP is an annual program that provides cost share for making improvements to crop land and grazing land, and for planting trees. Historically, the majority of applications for SWCP are for structural practices (terrace, tiling, grassed waterways) on row-cropped agricultural lands.

The Nemaha NRD works in partnership with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop and prioritize projects. The NRCS is responsible for design, lay out, and post construction verification of structural erosion control measures. They also serve as the technical experts for many other management practices like contour farming, cover cropping, reduced till or no-till farming.

Maintaining an erosion control system on Highly Erodible Lands is required to participate in USDA's Farm Bill Program. The investment in time and money is also critical to maintaining land values and profitability on working agricultural lands. Every inch of topsoil lost to erosion could take another several hundred years to regenerate.

If you own or operate land that is in need of some improvements, please reach out to your local NRCS office to discuss options that fit your operation and budget. The SWCP could be a great option for you to get some financial assistance!



## Protecting Structures - A Nemaha NRD Priority

Field staff at the Nemaha NRD continue to prioritize watershed structures in need of riprap to protect them from wave action damages.

Contractors and NRD crews have been working to place concrete riprap at the toe of dams in the Long Branch Watershed near Kirkman's Cove and the Upper Big Nemaha Watershed by Firth, Adams, & Sterling.

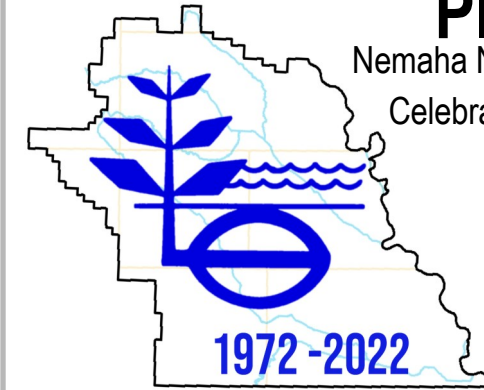


Nemaha NRD  
62161 Hwy 136  
Tecumseh, NE 68450



## Upcoming Events

- July 11-15 NRD 50th Anniversary Week
- July 14 Nemaha NRD Open House
- Nemaha NRD Board of Directors Meeting
- Aug 11 Nemaha NRD Board of Directors Meeting
- Sept 8 Nemaha NRD Board of Directors meeting
- Sept 13-15 Visit the NRD booth at Husker Harvest Days!



50 YEARS OF LEADING CONSERVATION, RECREATION, FLOOD CONTROL, & GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

## Please Join Us!

Nemaha NRD's 50th Anniversary Open House Celebration with Snacks & Refreshments

Thursday, July 14, 2022

2:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Nemaha NRD Office

62161 Hwy 136

Tecumseh, NE 68450