



Nemaha Natural Resources District

# Insight



Spring 2009

## Memorial Tree Plantings Honor Two Conservation Stewards



**NRD directors & staff with the tree planted in honor of Olin Sims. Left to right: W. Umland, B. Hilske, T. Godemann, B. Walker, D. Sugden, L. Heng, L. Beethe, J. Albrecht, R. Bohling, D. Siske, S. Kudrna, S. Nelson, S. Sugden.**

On Thursday, May 14, Nemaha Natural Resources District directors paused prior to their regularly scheduled board meeting to remember and honor two men who dedicated years of their lives to the betterment of natural resources. Don Larson, who served on the Nemaha Natural Resources District board of directors from 1980-2000, passed away earlier this spring. Larson was an active member of the board who also represented local constituents on the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts and Nebraska Natural Resources Commission. Current NRD directors who also served with Larson spoke of his integrity, honesty, and common sense approach. Larson's family was on hand to witness the planting of a Linden tree on the NRD property in his honor and added that "he would have loved this".

Following the Larson tree planting, a Japanese Maple tree was planted to recognize the contributions of Olin Sims, who served as president of the National Association of Conservation Districts from February to December, 2007. Sims died in

a ranching accident in 2007 at the age of 47. As part of an NACD-sponsored living legacy to Sims, Orval Gigstad, Nemaha NRD director and NACD board member, requested the memorial planting.



**Duane Sugden (L), NRD board member, and Bruce Larson (R), plant a linden tree in memory of Bruce's father, Don Larson at the NRD headquarters in Tecumseh.**

## Wayne Goering Joins NRD Board

Subdistrict 4 once again is represented by two directors with the recent appointment of Wayne Goering to the position left empty following the 2008 general election. Goering lives in Nebraska City and is retired from the Omaha Public Power District. He will serve the remainder of the four-year term, which will expire in 2012. When asked for his comments on becoming a board member, Goering indicated he just hoped to be a helpful member of the board. Prior to working at OPPD, Goering also farmed and operated a service station. He is married with two children and one grandson and enjoys camping, old cars, and yard work.



**Wayne Goering takes his oath of office at the May 14, 2009, meeting.**

# Recreation Area Update

Spring means it's time to think about visiting one of the four NRD recreation areas. District crews have been working hard to get the parks ready for the summer season. A number of new picnic tables have been installed at Kirkman's Cove and Wirth Brothers Lake this spring. A new concrete restroom was recently installed at the RV camping loop on the southwest side of Kirkman's Cove. It should also provide the boat launch area better access to a restroom facility.

## Iron Horse Restoration

The Nemaha NRD entered into an agreement with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to help restore Iron Horse Trail Lake. The 85-acre reservoir, which is located near DuBois in Pawnee County, was constructed in 1983 as part of the South Fork Watershed Project. Restoration plans call for the removal of over 200,000 cubic yards of sediment that has been deposited in the reservoir plus the installation of numerous fish habitat structures and several angler access improvements. A sediment basin will be constructed above the reservoir to help trap sediment and keep it out of the lake in the future. Engineers have estimated that the total cost of the project will be \$3.2 million. Game and Parks has committed \$2.1 million towards the project through the Aquatic Habitat Program. An additional \$930,000 is expected from the federal 319 Non-Point Source Pollution Program.

On May 4 NRD staff began lowering the water level in the lake. It will eventually be lowered by a total of 14 feet. The lake will remain open to the public in 2009; however, users should be aware that there will be limited access to the lake once the water level drops below the boat ramp. At that time the boat ramp will be closed, and users will have to access the water by foot. Small boats may be carried to the lake. No vehicles or ATVs will be allowed on the lakebed. All other facilities, except for the swimming beach, will remain open in 2009. It is expected that the entire park will be closed in 2010 during the renovation project and will reopen in 2011.

All fishing regulations remain in place with the exception that there are no length limits of fish. Fish may be salvaged only if they become trapped; however, the public is not allowed to transfer these fish into other water bodies.

Anyone with questions on the project or to find out the latest information on lake levels may contact the NRD office.

## Steamboat Trace

All 22 miles of the Steamboat Trace from the OPPD Nebraska City power plant to Brownville are open. The NRD does plan to do some repair work on the Honey Creek bridge in June, which will require that the bridge to be closed for approximately one week. Honey Creek is located between Peru and Brownville. Closures will be posted, and trail users may want to check with the NRD to find out the status of the work.

Funding for trail improvements and maintenance is always a challenge. A poker run event has been scheduled for the trail on July 11, which will help raise funds for future trail projects. Efforts were made to hold this event in 2008; however, it had to be cancelled as a result of flooding that occurred on the trail. T-shirts and prizes are all part of the event. Registration will be held at the Peru Trailhead beginning at 8:30 a.m. Check the NRD website, [www.nemahanrd.org](http://www.nemahanrd.org), for more information.



**Pawnee City school children join in celebrating the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Pawnee City Prairie Hills Connector Trail held Tuesday, May 12, 2009. The Nemaha NRD contributed \$25,000 in 2006 from its Urban Special Projects fund toward the construction costs of the trail.**

# Water Program Update

## High Capacity Flow Meter Cost-Share Program

- The District applied for and received funding for the next two years from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to establish a cost-share program for flow meters for water wells pumping greater than 50 gpm within the District.
- The program covers 50% of the cost of a new flow meter up to a maximum of \$500. Approval is required prior to purchase. Contact the office for more information or logon to our website, [www.nemahanrd.org](http://www.nemahanrd.org), and download the application.

## Chemigation Reminder

- Chemigation renewal applications were due into the office by June 1. Any permit received after will be considered a new application at a cost of \$30.00 per injection location.



# Nebraska Envirothon Competition Results

This year's state Envirothon competition was held Saturday, May 2, at Ponca State Park. Twelve teams from across the state competed for the opportunity to advance to the national contest that will be held later this summer in Asheville, North Carolina. Norris High School once again fielded a state qualifying team from the southeast Nebraska region. However, their total team score of 275.3 was just eight points short of the winning team, which was from Ord High School. Norris took home fourth place overall but did secure a first place finish in two of the seven topic areas: forestry and natural resources policy. The other testing categories were range, soils, aquatics, wildlife, and an oral presentation required on the topic of biodiversity in a changing world.

## From the Manager's Desk by Bob Hilske

### Iron Horse Fish Stories

You might have seen that show on TV where the grizzled Alaskan fishermen risk their lives to catch crab in the wind and the waves of the Bering Sea. There is no doubt that freezing temperatures, big waves crashing over the boat, and the occasional person falling overboard make for exciting television.

Don't think Alaska is the only place with cold, nasty weather; spring can be cruel in Nebraska too. In April NRD staff assisting Game and Parks Commission fisheries biologists headed out on the dangerous waters of Iron Horse Trail Lake in Pawnee County in an effort to catch the elusive bass, bluegill, and crappie. You ask why would normally sane people head out in weather with temperatures hovering around a brutal 60 degrees and gale force winds gusting to almost 10 miles per hour to catch some fish? Because next year the NRD will be draining and renovating the 85-acre lake to improve fisheries habitat and angler access. Doing this work will require the lake to be dropped down 14 feet in order to remove over 200,000 cubic yards of sediment that has been deposited in the reservoir over the past 25 years. At some point the remaining fish will be eradicated so the lake can be restocked with the proper balance of desirable species. It makes sense to try to salvage as many of the fish as we can.

Unlike those guys in Alaska, we didn't dump baskets over the side of the boats hoping that the bounty would wander into them. Game and Parks uses fish shocking units which stun the fish so they float to the top and can be netted into the boats. (I think we could get many more people interested in fishing if it always was this easy.) We netted a catch that any New England fisherman would be proud of – 150 bass and lots of bluegill and crappie. Salvaged fish were taken to other public lakes in eastern Nebraska including some nearby NRD reservoirs. The catch did include a number of 30-pound carp. These bad boys of the fish world were taken to some secret location by Game and Parks staff for a carp cooking demonstration. Apparently they have some secret spices that make carp respectable dining. Fish biologists don't like to be seen eating carp, however, because it can greatly tarnish their reputation, sort of like a cattle rancher walking into a sushi restaurant

We hope as the lake goes down we can salvage more fish and stock them into our other lakes. Things are moving ahead with the project, so next year at this time construction equipment should be working hard at getting this project completed. When it is all done, hopefully everyone can come out and have their own memorable fishing experience.

So will you see our adventures on an episode of "Deadliest Catch" anytime soon? We didn't lose anybody overboard; and other than a broken motor and a little salty sailor language when a boat got stuck on a submerged log, it wouldn't make for exciting television. Rest assured that we were ready to call in the Coast Guard at a moment's notice in the event one of the those six-inch high waves came crashing over the boat and knocked someone overboard.

## Hazardous Waste Collections Successful

A total of 352 households safely disposed of their unwanted household hazardous waste products at five collections held in April. Sponsored by the Five Rivers RC&D and Nemaha NRD, funding for the collections was provided through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. Collections were held in Auburn, Falls City, Pawnee City, Nebraska City, and Tecumseh. Items collected (in pounds) were as follows:

County	Number of Households	Paint	Pesticides	Acids/Bases	Misc.	Florescent Bulbs	Batteries	Number of Volunteers
Johnson	22	2,560	500	140	100	-	-	4
Nemaha	108	3,380	320	340	140	10	800	16
Otoe	70	3,460	1,760	60	300	-	-	10
Pawnee	16	580	240	20	60	10	35	4
Richardson	136	4,540	740	680	340	30	700	6
Grand Totals	352	14,520	3,560	1,240	940	50	1535	40

### NEMAHA NRD STAFF

Bob Hilske, Manager  
 Scott Nelson, Assistant Manager  
 Jane Kuhl, Administrative Assistant  
 Allison Caspers, Administrative Assistant  
 Lisa Bartels, Secretary  
 Chuck Wingert,  
     Water Resources Manager  
 Charlie Pierce,  
     Water Resources Technician  
 Steve Bartels, Field Representative  
 Mark McDonald, Field Representative  
 Vernon Speers, Jr., Field Representative  
 Aaron Stalder, Resources Specialist  
 Tomas Chalé Aké, Projects Crew Leader  
 Shawn Kreienhop, Resources Specialist  
 Doug Schmidt & Phil Vance,  
     Seasonal Maintenance  
 Dan Gudenkauf, Water Resources Intern

### NRD STAFF IN NRCS OFFICES

Deb Kreienhop, Auburn  
 Glenda Bates, Tecumseh  
 Jim Masters, Syracuse  
 Amanda Hartman, Falls City  
 Kathy Harlow, Pawnee City  
 Tyler Weishahn, Auburn  
 Craig Willoughby, Tecumseh

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Albrecht, Nebraska City  
 Lisa Beethe, Elk Creek (**Vice-Chair**)  
 Rob Bohling, Johnson (**Sec.-Treas.**)  
 Charles Duryea, Humboldt  
 Orval Gigstad, Syracuse  
 Ted Godemann, Falls City  
 Wayne Goering, Nebraska City  
 Lynn Heng, Nebraska City  
 Ron Heskett, Nemaha  
 Scott Kudrna, Auburn (**Chair**)  
 Jim Rush, Tecumseh  
 Don Siske, Table Rock  
 Mike Speece, Auburn  
 J. Duane Sugden, Sterling  
 Steve Sugden, Douglas  
 William Umland, Palmyra  
 Bruce Walker, Falls City  
 Dan Watermeier, Syracuse  
 Paul Weber, Firth  
 Tom White, Falls City  
 Jim Wirth, Nebraska City

### NEMAHA NRD OFFICE:



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# Big Muddy Creek Road Dam Nearing Construction

Construction of one of the larger Big Muddy Creek Watershed projects located ½ mile east of the intersection of 634 Avenue and 724 Road in Nemaha County should begin soon. The Nemaha Natural Resources District recently awarded a construction contract in the amount of \$156,000 to Don Bruna Construction from Marysville, Kansas, to build this 50,000 cubic yard dam that will replace an aging, one-lane county bridge with a wider, safer, two-lane road. The dam will control 1,000 drainage acres and will create a 15 surface acre lake that will be considered private and not open to the public.

For well over a year, the Nemaha NRD and Nemaha County Department of Roads have been working together on this joint project to secure funding, land rights, and permits to bring this project to fruition. JEO Consulting Group was hired for survey, design, and construction inspection services.

Nemaha County secured one-dollar easements with impacted neighboring landowners to allow this project to go forward. One of the main landowners impacted by this project, Ray Caspers, indicated that the multiple benefits this structure would provide such as transportation enhancement, flood control, wildlife habitat, and private recreation well justified the one-dollar easement compensation. Current plans for this project are for Nemaha County to remove the existing county bridge in mid-July and Bruna Construction to begin construction of the dam in August. It is expected that this project will be complete around the first of October.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



MARK THIS DATE

### June

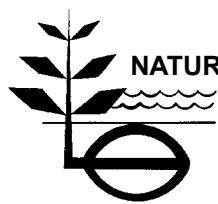
- 7-9 GMDA Conference, Estes Park, CO
- 11 NRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh – 8 p.m.
- 22-23 NARD Board Meeting & Basin Tour

### July

- 3 Independence Day Holiday Observed, NRD Office Closed
- 9 NRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh – 8 p.m.

### August

- 2-8 Canon Envirothon, Asheville, NC
- 13 NRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh – 8 p.m.



**nemaha**

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

62161 Hwy 136  
TECUMSEH, NEBRASKA 68450

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The Nemaha NRD's **Insight** is a publication of the Nemaha Natural Resources District. Requests to be placed on the **Insight** mailing list and/or comments regarding information in this publication should be directed to Jane Kuhl, Administrative Assistant, 62161 Hwy 136, Tecumseh, NE 68450. Phone (402) 335-3325