



Nemaha Natural Resources District

# Insight

Spring  
2008



## Used Computer Collection Overwhelms Organizers

Organizers of a used computer collection held in Nebraska City on Saturday, April 5, never dreamed that all the equipment collected would have to be literally stuffed into the truck that morning! Almost 9,000 pounds of computers, monitors, and printers were dropped off by 43 vehicles that showed up at the Otoe County Road Department's Nebraska City shop. Techware Recycling from Lincoln, who was hired to collect and dispose of the equipment, refurbishes and recycles as much of the equipment as possible. What cannot be recycled is destroyed.

Funds for the collection have been provided through the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality's Litter Reduction and Recycling Grant program. The Nemaha NRD served as sponsor for this project with the Five Rivers RC&D in Tecumseh providing the organization and administration of the event. Another collection was held May 10<sup>th</sup> at Falls City.



Organizers and volunteers prepare to load a pallet of monitors collected at the Otoe County Roads Department April 5.

## Flood Control/Recreation On It's Way to Buck & Duck Creek

On March 17 the NRD signed an historic agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to secure funding to help complete the Buck and Duck Creek Watershed project near Peru. The agreement will commit \$1,976,500 towards the actual construction of the project with the balance of the \$2.47 million approved by Congress going to NRCS for design assistance. Total cost of the project has been estimated at \$3.91 million resulting in a non-federal contribution of over \$1.4 million. To help offset this requirement, the District has submitted a \$950,000 proposal to the Nebraska Resources Development fund for grant assistance.

The District hopes to begin construction on the Buck Creek dam, which is just west of Peru and does not include a recreation component, in the spring of 2009. Activities leading up to the start of construction will include completing the final design, obtaining all the required permits, and acquiring the necessary land rights for Buck Creek. Johnson Appraisal from Lincoln will be doing land appraisal work for the NRD at both sites. Construction on the Duck Creek site, which will include public recreation, is expected to begin in 2010.

Another goal during the next year is to put together a program and funding package to provide incentives to owners of property above both structures to install land treatment practices that will reduce sediment and contaminant loading into the reservoirs. Practices might include small ponds, terraces, converting cropland to grass, or other practices deemed beneficial. Similar programs have been very successful in watersheds above Kirkman's Cove and Iron Horse. It is hoped that if funding is secured, the first cost-share applications could be accepted around July 1, 2009.

## NRD Candidates Advance to November General Election

Deadlines have come and gone to file for seats on the Nemaha Natural Resources District board of directors. Nine of the ten positions up for election this year saw interest from candidates, with only two contested races. Because there were no more than two people who filed for any one seat, however, a primary runoff will not be required.

Only six of the ten incumbents who could file for re-election chose to run again. Since no one filed for Subdistrict 4, which is within Nebraska City, this vacancy must be advertised in 2009 to be filled by appointment.

The slate of candidates vying for a spot on the board this fall is as follows:

<u>Subdistrict</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
1	Chuck Starr*	Bennet
	Steven Sugden	Douglas
2	William Umland	Palmyra
3	Lynn Heng	Nebraska City
4	No Filing	
5	Dwight Eisenhower	Syracuse
	Orval Gigstad*	Syracuse
6	Robbie Bohling*	Johnson
7	Mike Speece*	Auburn
8	Charles Duryea	Humboldt
9	Tom White*	Falls City
10	Ted Godemann*	Falls City

\*Incumbent

## Big Muddy Creek – First Structures Underway

B.A.B., Inc. from Adams, Nebraska, is gearing up for a busy spring construction schedule in the Big Muddy Creek Watershed. The Nemaha NRD board of directors recently awarded construction bids to B.A.B. totaling \$285,000 to build two grade control and two weir structures.

**Dave Borrenpohl Structure** – Located approximately five miles east of Tecumseh on Highway 136, construction of a 16,000 cubic yard dam will soon begin. This structure will control 220 drainage acres and will create a 4.5-acre pond. As both the landowner and the NRD desire to control erosion, Borrenpohl admits his true wish is to create a beautiful pond that he and his family can enjoy for recreation.

**Phil Bohl Structure** – Construction of this 17,000 cubic yard dam is also scheduled to begin about five miles south of Johnson near Martin Luther Church. This structure will control 390 drainage acres and will create a three-acre pond. The main purpose of this structure is grade control as it is on a tributary that is severely degraded, but Bohl's main concern is construction of a stable crossing and a reliable source of water for livestock. After consulting with his son, Craig, Bohl also asked to modify the dam design to take advantage of the potential recreation benefits.

**728 & 730 Road Weir Structures** – Two weirs near the town of Johnson are set for construction yet this spring also. A short explanation of these projects includes constructing a rock and sheet pile weir downstream of two existing county road bridges. The design goal is to pond water in the stream and slow down the velocity of water near these bridges, thus cushioning in-coming flows which will lessen stream bank erosion affecting bridge pilings and abutments. To the right is a picture of a weir located in western Iowa that resembles the weirs that will be built by Johnson.

A demonstration field day is being planned for this coming fall to educate and inform the public about these projects and other forthcoming projects.



## What's Up at Iron Horse Trail Lake

The Iron Horse Watershed Project is almost complete. Over the past three years, the NRD has been working with landowners in the watershed to install management practices that will hopefully reduce sediment and contaminant loading into the 86-acre reservoir. The last planned piece of the watershed puzzle was to look at installing a sediment control basin above or in the upper portion of the reservoir. After careful study, it was determined that the construction of a sediment basin in the upper portion of the reservoir was feasible; and the estimated cost would be a minimum of \$250,000.

Game and Parks has also approached the NRD about completely renovating the 25-year old reservoir to remove sediment and improve fisheries habitat. The lake has been included in the Commission's statewide lake restoration plan that was approved in March. Their fisheries biologists have explained that even though fishing results may still be acceptable, the quality of the fish population is in decline; and they are seeing an increasing population of carp and other undesirable species in the lake.

After encouragement from Game and Parks, the NRD agreed to help develop a plan to renovate the entire lake including installing the sediment basin. Typically a restoration project would include eradicating the present fish population, removing sediment, installing in-lake fish habitat structures, and reestablishing a desirable fish population. Presently The Flatwater Group, a Lincoln engineering firm, is working with the NRD, Game and Parks, and the Department of Environmental Quality to develop a renovation plan for the lake. The NRD is planning to hold a public meeting on the proposed plan later this summer. No date or location for the meeting has been set, so the public is encouraged to watch for more information.

It is expected that the NRD and Game and Parks will make a decision whether to proceed with the renovation plan in late 2008. There is no timetable on when work would actually begin as it is highly dependent on funding from Game and Parks. Once a timetable is established, a date will be set to drawdown the reservoir so the in-lake work can be completed. There are no plans to drawdown the lake or eradicate fish this summer. The NRD will be doing some repair work to the principle spillway in the next few months, which should take less than a week.

## Water Resources Notes – Spring 2008

• **Groundwater Management Plan Updates** – At the May 8<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors meeting, the Board issued an Administrative Order extending the expiration date from May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008, until October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008, for the District-wide temporary closure to the issuance of well permits for wells designed to pump greater than 50 gallons per minute. The additional time will allow the District to finish developing rules and regulations related to groundwater quantity.

• **Water Well Flowmeter Cost-Share Program** – On May 1<sup>st</sup> the District began taking applications for cost-share on water well flowmeters. The program will pay 50% of the total cost of a new flowmeter up to a \$500 maximum. Program requirements include being a landowner within the District and agreeing to use, maintain, and report usage for a ten-year period. Any well that is capable of pumping 50 gallons per minute or more and is not used for domestic purposes is eligible. Funding for this program has been provided in part through a \$40,000, two-year grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Contact the District office for more information or to sign up for this program.

• **Well Abandonment Cost-Share Program – Have a well that needs to be closed?**

Abandoned wells are not only a safety issue with children and pets but are points of entry for contaminants to enter groundwater (southeast Nebraska's sole source of drinking water). The Nemaha NRD provides 75% cost-share for the proper closure of abandoned wells with a maximum cost-share payment of \$500 for each cased well and \$700 for each hand dug well. Nebraska law requires the decommissioning be conducted by a licensed well driller or pump installation contractor. If you have a well that you would like to have closed, please contact the NRD office for a program application. Approval is required prior to closure.

• **Chemigation** – Nebraska law requires anyone planning to apply more than just water through an irrigation distribution system (center pivot, gated pipe, subsurface drip) in order to fertilize or treat crops must first be certified with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. The producer must also apply for a chemigation permit with their local NRD, and the NRD is then required to inspect each injection location for mandatory safety equipment.

• **Water Analysis** – Any resident within the District who would like to have their domestic or livestock well sampled and analyzed for nitrate-nitrogen and/or coliform bacteria is asked to contact the office and schedule an appointment. The sample is collected and analyzed by NRD staff, and there is no charge for this service. Additional analyses may be conducted for a fee from an outside laboratory.

## From the Manager's Desk —→ by Bob Hilske *Can Spring Really be Here?*

I think everyone would agree that we had a long, tough winter this year. In an era of global warming, we're not used to the type of arctic brutality we had to suffer through the past six months. Of course, we can all agree regardless of our age that when we were kids it snowed all the time and the temperature never climbed above 20 degrees from December through February. In fact, I think when I was a kid I remember watching glaciers melting away from the last ice age somewhere north of Omaha.

In the old days you could tell when winter ended and spring began simply by looking at a calendar. With the crazy weather we have now, it isn't that easy anymore. People have used everything from groundhogs to the return of robins to tell them spring has arrived. At the NRD we like to use the start of tree planting as our seasonal thermometer. Of course, tree season isn't all just about ordering and planting. Often times we get questions; and sometimes we even get some that are a little challenging to answer, such as:

- The person who asks if the 200 trees they never ordered are in.
- A landowner complaining that the shrubs he planted to attract wildlife were all eaten by the rabbits and deer.
- Ten landowners asking if they can be first to have their trees planted this year.
- When picking up trees a customer asking if it is okay to keep them in their garage and plant them in July when their kids are home from school.
- The person who reminds us that last summer was the driest on record, then asks why all their trees died.
- A customer calling and asking how big a trailer he is going to need to haul his 50 seedling trees.
- Someone from Otoe County wanting to make a minor change to their tree plan and asking if we know where their Pawnee County farm is.

The Nemaha NRD probably doesn't brag about tree planting enough. Maybe we don't want to get blamed for all those cedar trees growing in pastures around the NRD. This year we sold over 20,000 trees, which is not as many as we used to sell but still plenty to feed all those rabbits and deer. Plus, since we are so ready to see the start of spring, we're happy to answer any question you ask us.

## Nemaha NRD Crews Hit the Trail

• **Maintenance** - Resurfacing of a four-mile stretch of the Steamboat Trace between Peru and Brownville, that was damaged by flooding in the spring of 2007, should begin soon and is scheduled to be completed by the end of May. The District has contracted with Lottman Carpenter Construction from Diller, Nebraska, to do the work. During the construction the trail will be closed from Peru to Weldon Bridge, located approximately two miles north of Brownville. People planning to use the Steamboat Trace should check the NRD website [www.nemahanrd.org](http://www.nemahanrd.org) or contact the District for information regarding the status of the trail.

Portions of the trail also fell victim to the December ice storms as downed trees and tree limbs littered the trail. Several miles south of Peru were totally impassible following the storm. District crews spent almost a month clearing trees and chipping debris so the trail could be reopened this spring. Although the trail is now open, the cleanup work is not completed. Total cost to repair weather related damage is expected to exceed \$90,000. The District has secured assistance from FEMA through their post-disaster aid program to cover up to 75% of the cost.

• **Passing of Jean Sherman** - In 2007 the NRD dedicated a 1,000-foot segment of the trail south of Peru as the Roland Sherman Memorial Area. Mr. Sherman was responsible for the many carvings that were etched in the sandstone bluffs along that portion of the trail. Sadly Roland's wife, Jean Sherman, passed away earlier this year.



Jean was a big supporter of the trail and spent many hours helping to build and maintain the trailhead shelter in Peru. As a result of her work, the facility has become the most popular starting point for trail users.

• **Upcoming Events** - On June 8 the Steamboat Trace Association will hold a poker run that will give participants an opportunity to win prizes based on the best poker hand collected along the trail. Proceeds from the event will help maintain and promote the Steamboat Trace. More information on the poker run is available on the NRD website.

Another popular event is the annual juvenile diabetes fun run which occurs in September of every year. Groups planning to hold events are encouraged to contact the NRD, and we will be happy to include them on the website.

## NEMAHA NRD STAFF

Bob Hilske, Manager  
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Jane Kuhl, Administrative Assistant  
Allison Caspers,  
Administrative Secretary  
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  
Seasonal Maintenance Crew: Phil Vance,  
Doug Schmidt, Tyler Bassinger

## NRD STAFF IN NRCS OFFICES

Deb Kreienhop, Auburn  
Glenda Bates, Tecumseh  
Jim Masters, Syracuse  
Rachel Shafer, Falls City  
Kathy Harlow, Pawnee City

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dan Watermeier, Syracuse  
Paul Weber, Firth  
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## Watershed of Wonders Moves to Iron Horse

The fourth installment of Watershed of Wonders is set to take place on Wednesday, June 18, 2008, at Iron Horse Trail Lake near DuBois. This day camp is designed to provide natural resources education to youngsters ages 10-12 in a fun and safe atmosphere.

Those familiar with the event will remember that the first three were held at Kirkman's Cove in 2002, 2004, and 2006. Funding for the day camps is provided in part by an EPA Section 319 grant through the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality as part of the watershed management programs taking place within the watersheds of these public recreation lakes. Now that the projects within

Kirkman's Cove are completed, the day camp has moved on to Iron Horse Trail Lake.

Participants this year will experience the "wonders" of Iron Horse Trail Lake, which is currently under consideration for renovation as the last installment of watershed planning for the lake. Final details of the day's events are still being worked out, but a boat ride on the lake, water rockets, fishing instruction, and an amazing water cycle race are sure to please those who attend. Sponsored by the Nemaha NRD, there is no charge to attend; but participants are asked to pre-register by May 15. To obtain a registration form or for more information, contact the Nemaha NRD at (402) 335-3325.

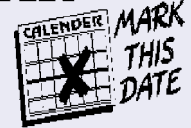
WOW

## Free Park Permit Weekend Scheduled at NRD Parks

Anyone who has visited Iron Horse Trail Lake, Kirkman's Cove, or Wirth Brothers Lake over the past few years probably realizes that entry into these parks requires a Nemaha NRD issued vehicle entry permit. Both annual permits valid from January-December and two-day, temporary permits are available to park visitors. Annual permits are now on sale for \$12 each, with the option of adding one additional permit for \$6, and are good for all three parks. They can be purchased at the parks, by mail, or in person at the NRD office in Tecumseh. Two-day permits are always \$5 and available for purchase at the parks.

For those who just aren't sure whether to invest that \$12 for an annual permit, the "free park permit weekend" coming up May 17-18 is the perfect opportunity to give the parks a trial run. On that Saturday and Sunday only, no permit is required. However, keep in mind that electrical camping fees at Kirkman's Cove are still required during this weekend.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



### May

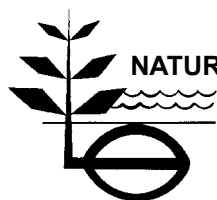
- 13 Primary Election
- 17-18 Free Park Permit Weekend at Nemaha NRD Parks
- 26 Memorial Day Holiday, NRD Office Closed

### June

- 7 Steamboat Trace Poker Run
- 8-10 NACD Regional Meeting, Nebraska City
- 12 NRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 16-17 NARD Basin Tour and Meeting (Loup Basin)
- 18 Watershed of Wonders @ Iron Horse Trail Lake

### July

- 4 Independence Day Holiday, NRD Office Closed
- 9 NRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 28-8/3 Canon Envirothon, Flagstaff, Arizona



**nemaha**

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

62161 Hwy 136  
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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