



Nemaha Natural Resources District

Insight



Spring 2011

Iron Horse Trail Lake Set for Grand Reopening

A recent walk-through inspection with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission concluded that restoration of Iron Horse Trail Lake is over 99% complete. Steve Satra who manages the Nebraska Sport Fishery Restoration Fund stated that “we were aiming to create a Cadillac fishery but ended up with a BMW instead.” Satra also stated that in his “many years managing the fund, this project may have topped them all.” Game & Parks was a major partner in this lake restoration project by contributing over \$1 million in combined Restoration Funds and Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Funds to restore and enhance fishery habitat and angler access.

In addition to the contributions of Game & Parks, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality kicked in \$1 million through the EPA 319 program toward removal of over 200,000 cubic yards of sediment from the lake and the construction of a sediment basin at the upper end. Another \$46,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust helped complete additional fishing access points throughout the lake.

NRD officials have announced plans to open only the day-use area of this park for Memorial Day weekend; the remainder of the park’s facilities will open for all uses except fishing on June 25, 2011. Delaying the opening of all park areas will allow for the lake to refill with water and newly seeded grass areas to become established. Additional information will become available about plans for a formal grand opening ceremony that will take place on Saturday, June 25.

In addition to all of the in-lake fishery improvements, park users will notice nine new electric RV camping pads, a boat mooring island, hard surfaced walking paths, a wooden handicap accessible fishing pier, and a shady, new, non-electric camping area for RV and tent camping.

Mark your calendars and watch your local news for more details about the upcoming grand “reopening” of Iron Horse Trail Lake on June 25!



Sediment basin created at upper reaches of the lake



One of the new, electrical RV hookups



Accessible, wooden fishing pier near the boat dock

Water News Updates

High Capacity Flow Meter & Irrigation Management Cost-Share Program

- The District received funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to establish a cost-share program for water well flow meters. Limited to wells within the District pumping greater than 50 gpm, the program covers 50% of the cost of a new flow meter up to a maximum of \$500. **Approval is required prior to purchase.**

- Cost-share is available through the same grant for irrigation management equipment. Eligible equipment includes soil moisture sensors, meters and atmometers (evapotranspiration gages). The program covers 50% of the cost of the equipment up to a maximum of \$300. **Approval is required prior to purchase.**

- Contact the office for more information or logon to our website for more information.

- THE CURRENT GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENT IS SET TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2011

- **GET YOUR ORDERS IN TODAY BEFORE IT’S TOO LATE!**

Chemigation Reminder

- **Chemigation Permit Applications are due by JUNE 1, 2011! Renewal permits received after June 1 will be considered new** – an application fee of \$30.00 and an injection site inspection are required.

2011 Recreation in the Nemaha NRD

Steamboat Trace

This time of year we start getting calls and emails about the status of the Steamboat Trace. The trail has been open for use, but work is still under way to repair damage to the trail surface and bridges. During the next few months, the NRD will be repairing two bridges in the Brownville area. There are no plans to close the trail while this work is going on; however, users could expect some short detours. The Missouri River is running bank-full again this year, so the trail will be subject to flooding. River levels are impacted by releases from Gavin's Point Dam and runoff from the river basins between Yankton, South Dakota, and southeast Nebraska. It appears that releases from Gavin's Point will be high for the entire year, so the potential for flooding on the trail is higher than normal. Those interested in using the trail may want to check the NRD website or contact the NRD prior to using the trail, particularly if there have been heavy rainfall events in western Iowa or eastern Nebraska.



Bridge near Brownville scheduled for replacement this spring.

What's new at Kirkman's Cove and Wirth Brothers Lake?

The District has placed a high priority on getting Iron Horse Trail Lake open this summer, but there are a few upgrades in our other areas too. Kids visiting Kirkman's will be excited to find new playground equipment at the non-electric campground on the southwest area of the lake. If it looks familiar, the playground equipment was acquired from the school in Table Rock.



Assembly of new playground equipment at Kirkman's

You might also notice the disappearance of some of the eastern redcedar trees at Kirkman's Cove. A considerable amount of cedar encroachment since the park opened 25 years ago led the NRD to focus on removing some of the trees. Unfortunately pine wilt has killed many of the pine trees in the park, and those are also being removed.

With help from the Nebraska Game and Parks, the District overhauled the archery range at Wirth Brothers Lake near Tecumseh. Old, worn targets were recently replaced with new targets. Though there was some debate whether to do this, hopefully archers will take advantage of the area; and it will be properly respected by everyone.

Park User Suggestions

The District gets numerous suggestions every year for improving our park facilities. Many are great and some pretty humorous, but unfortunately we can't address them all. Here are some of the more common suggestions and an explanation why they can't be incorporated into the parks at this time:

More electric RV hookups at Kirkman's Cove - We expanded the electrical area a few years ago and at this time have no plans to install more. To add more to the present area would require reducing the size of the playground area. Some have asked about hookups on the southwest part of the lake, but no close source of electricity is available, making it cost prohibitive.

Trailer Dump Stations – Dump stations work best if they are tied into a sewage disposal system which we presently do not have at any of our recreation areas. Vaults are an option; however, they have a capacity of up to 2000 gallons. That may seem like a lot, but most RVs have tanks that hold from 30 to 50 gallons of wastewater. For you mathematicians that means it only takes around 50 RVs to fill up the vault. Bottom line: we'd be emptying the vault out every two to three weeks, which isn't practical. Overfilled vaults aren't much fun to deal with either.

Water hookups at RV sites – Obviously there is a cost to do this, but the other concern is that we have water pressure/volume issues at our parks. If several campers would be using water at the same time, there wouldn't be much coming out the faucet.

Boat dock on the northeast side of Kirkman's Cove – This is one we are going to take a look at. We did put an old dock in a few years ago; but unfortunately an over aggressive boater hit the dock, and we had to shorten it. Another concern is boaters mooring their boats at the dock for long periods of time making it unavailable for other users. This means we either need a very large dock or try to police it.

Showers at campgrounds – Cost and maintenance are the biggest reasons we have not pursued this suggestion. Plumbing and an unattended public use facility are not a good mix. Since all of our park areas are a distance away from the District office, it would be difficult to monitor the site and address issues such as sewer backups, water leaks, vandalism, etc.

Fish stocking - The District gets many comments regarding the fishing at all of our lakes. We work with Game and Parks on monitoring and stocking when feasible. With the lake improvements at Iron Horse, we hope that it will be one of the best fishing lakes in eastern Nebraska. When dealing with small lakes, sometimes decisions must be made on what uses to focus. Because it is the largest lake, the NRD decided years ago to allow higher speed boating at Kirkman's Cove. However, this limits its value as a fishery. Historically Wirth Brothers Lake has had some problems holding water, which has made it difficult to manage the fisheries. It appears that the lake level is much more stable, so hopefully it will allow us to focus more on the fisheries in the lake.

Mowing – We contract out all our mowing, and the schedule is set at the beginning of the season so that the contractor can incorporate it into their routine. It is hard to out-guess the weather; and if there is above average rainfall, the grass may grow a little longer than desired between mowings. Additional mowings increase our contract cost, which we try to avoid. The mowing schedule does take into account major use weekends so the parks are ready for the big holiday crowds.

Park Rules & Regulations

Last fall the NRD board adopted updates and changes to the rules and regulations that apply to all of its public recreation areas. While no major changes were incorporated, some areas were rewritten to better clarify or address the facilities that are now available at the parks. The board made no changes to park entry permit or camping fees. While the State of Nebraska decided to allow alcohol within most of its public areas, the Nemaha NRD board retained its current stance on prohibiting alcohol at all of its areas, which include Kirkman's Cove, Iron Horse Trail Lake, Wirth Brothers Lake, Prairie Owl, and the Steamboat Trace trail. A complete set of the rules and regulations is available on the NRD website, www.nemahanrd.org or by contacting the NRD office.

Park Permits/Free Park Permit Weekend

2011 marks the 13th year that the Nemaha NRD has required vehicle entry permits for three of its public recreation areas: Kirkman's Cove, Iron Horse Trail Lake, and Wirth Brothers Lake. Funds collected from the sale of the permits go directly back to the parks – new, concrete restrooms, pedestal picnic tables, playground equipment, picnic shelters, and additional signage are examples of the improvements paid for with park permit dollars.

Permits may be purchased at the parks themselves through self-serve iron rangers or by contacting the NRD office in Tecumseh. Two-day, temporary permits cost \$5; or an annual permit is just \$12 and will provide access to all three parks through December 31.

You've never been to the parks, and you're not sure if you want to invest in that annual permit? Every May during the weekend before Memorial Day, the NRD suspends the park permit requirement; so you can visit free this year during the May 21-22 weekend.

From the Manager's Desk by Bob Hilske The New Iron Horse

After a major makeover we're getting ready to reopen Iron Horse Trail Lake. This wasn't one of those Hollywood stars needing a little touchup work; we had to do some serious pulling and tugging to get all the wrinkles out. As the project unfolded, we thought Iron Horse had more to offer than just a great place to fish; so we looked at other improvements that could be made to expand park use.

When Iron Horse opened in 1983, camping was tents and Coleman stoves. Perhaps the showoffs down the street had a fancy, popup camper; but let's face it, that was considered Beverly Hills style camping. Today folks "camp" in 35-foot RVs that practically cause the power grid to go down when they are plugged in. Somehow OPPD buried a powerline through the biggest rock pile in Nebraska, and now we have electric hookups. For those of you that still like to rough it, we will be opening a new RV and tent camping area that, although it lacks electricity, has something better – big trees! Now while the 21st century campers watch TV in their air conditioned RVs, the retro folks can still sit around the campfire slapping mosquitoes and burning hot dogs.

The lake will also be more accessible to the public. There are angler access points around the lake, and trails will tie most of the areas together. Eventually we hope to have a hiking/biking trail around the whole lake. Great effort was made to provide more fishing opportunities to folks with disabilities, the highlight being the new, wooden fishing deck.

One of the things we really wanted to address was the swimming beach at Iron Horse. It was in poor shape and rarely used. Now it's really nice; the guys even found a top-secret source of sand the government only allows to be used at beaches in Florida and sand traps at Augusta National Golf Club. Maybe you'll see Tiger on the beach working on his golf swing.

I thought it might be a nice touch to name the major use areas around the lake. Hopefully it will make it less sterile and easier to identify exactly where you are. Now we have places like Eagles Nest Cove, Timber Point, and Pawnee Landing. Instead of staying in the "RV campground on the west side of the lake" you'll be able to tell your friends you camped at Limestone Cove. Won't they be impressed! Great care was taken to select names that fit the area, but don't give us too much credit; if someone would have given us enough money, you would have been camping in the Acme Chemical Corporation Campground.

This has been a great project. We had plenty of help from Nebraska Game and Parks, Department of Environmental Quality, The Flatwater Group Consulting, and Shanahan Brothers Construction. The best part is most of the cost is being paid through a variety of grants including the EPA Clean Lakes Program, Aquatic Habitat Program, Sport Fisheries Restoration Program, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Our staff has also invested their time on this project. I hope you come out and visit the new Iron Horse. Who knows, if you're lucky Tiger will give you a few tips on your golf swing.

Project Briefs

Many of our projects have a federal funding component, and the federal budget has been a hot news item the past few months. Concern was that federal budget cuts could impact some of our federally funded projects such as Buck and Duck Creek and the Wilson Creek 8H dam renovation. Recently NRCS announced that all previously approved projects will continue to be funded, so work should move ahead as scheduled.

Buck Creek Construction

Work on the Buck Creek dam started last fall, and construction should gear up by the end of May. Shanahan Brothers Construction of Lincoln is building the dam, which is located just west of Peru. If everything goes as planned, we hope the dam will be built by the end of the year. When completed it will be 1,030 feet long and create a permanent pool of 42 acres.

Wilson Creek 8H

Wilson Creek 8H is located along Highway 2 between Syracuse and Dunbar. The structure was originally built in 1968 as a low-hazard structure, which basically means that if it were to fail, there is little or no chance that lives would be lost. As a result of the relocation of Highway 2 back in the 1990s, it was determined

that the structure should be reclassified as high-hazard, meaning lives could be endangered if there is a failure. High hazard structures have more stringent design requirements, so the dam must be upgraded to those standards. Some of the improvements would include replacing the present steel spillway tube with a concrete tube, enlarging the auxiliary spillway, and increasing the height of the dam.

Recently the NRD signed an agreement with NRCS to help fund the improvements to Wilson Creek 8H. In addition to design assistance, NRCS agreed to provide up to \$500,000 towards the construction cost. Construction on this project will most likely take place in 2012.

Firth Drainage Project

Work on the Firth Drainage Project started this spring, and it will include channel improvements through the community and the construction of a four-acre stormwater detention cell north of the community. The NRD agreed to provide up to \$100,000 toward the construction of the detention cell. Firth is handling all the administration and contracting of this project, and Olsson Associates of Lincoln worked on the design. The project should be done by the end of the summer.

CALENDAR OF May EVENTS



21-22 Free Park Permit Weekend
@ Nemaha NRD Parks
30 Memorial Day Holiday,
NRD Office Closed

June

9 NNRD Board meeting, Tecumseh
13-15 NARD Board Meeting
& Basin Tour
25 Iron Horse Trail Lake Grand Opening

July

4 Independence Day Holiday,
NRD Office Closed
14 NRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh

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
Brandon Beethe, Water Resources Intern
Doug Schmidt & Phil Vance,
Seasonal Maintenance

NRD STAFF IN NRCS OFFICES

Deb Kreienhop, Auburn
Glenda Bates, Tecumseh
Chuck Porter, Syracuse
Amanda Hartman, Falls City
Kathy Harlow, Pawnee City
Technicians: Dan Gudenkauf,
Delmar Schmidt

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Albrecht, Nebraska City
Charles Bausch, Adams
Lisa Beethe, Elk Creek (**Chair**)
Rob Bohling, Johnson (**Vice Chair**)
Charles Duryea, Humboldt
Orval Gigstad, Syracuse
Michael Gilson, Nebraska City
Ted Godemann, Falls City
Wayne Goering, Nebraska City
Dave Guhde, Nebraska City
Scott Kudrna, Auburn
William Niedfeldt, Shubert
Don Siske, Table Rock (**Sec.-Treas.**)
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

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New Directors Join NRD Board

Three new members were inducted on the Nemaha NRD board of directors during their February meeting. All three were filling slots left vacant following the 2010 general election or due to resignation. A great deal of interest was shown for the open seats, particularly the at-large position, which may be held by a qualified candidate from anywhere within the District's eight-county area. Those selected to fill the vacancies are:

Charles Bausch – Chosen for the four-year At-Large position, Bausch lives in rural Otoe County near Bennet, but his roots go back to Pawnee County where he was born and raised. He works for the Nebraska Rural Water Association as a training and GIS/GPS map specialist, and along with his wife, Emily, raises sheep and cattle. Bausch stated he “would like to be a part of the decision making process” and wants the “opportunity to help make decisions for our district.”

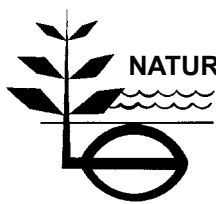
Dave Guhde – Following the resignation of Lynn Heng from the Subdistrict 3 position, Guhde was selected to serve the remainder of this term through 2012. Having been involved in agriculture all his life in southeast Nebraska and southwest Iowa, Guhde is also a licensed realtor in Nebraska and Iowa as well as a licensed mortgage loan originator in Nebraska. He and wife, Deana, live in Nebraska City. Guhde's objectives as a NRD board member include having user-friendly programs that help business while not being over-restrictive.

William Niedfeldt – As a second generation Nemaha NRD director, Bill follows in the footsteps of his father, Albert, who represented Richardson County from the NRD's inception in



L-R: Charles Bausch, Dave Guhde, & Bill Niedfeldt take their oath of office on February 10.

1972 through 1990. Currently a loan officer and branch manager/ Vice President at Richardson County Bank & Trust in Stella, Bill previously farmed in the Shubert area for about 20 years. He represents Subdistrict 9 which includes some of Nemaha and Richardson Counties. Bill's goals include preserving and developing our soil and water resources while expanding recreation, protecting the environment, providing for wildlife, and protecting our farms and farm economy.



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