

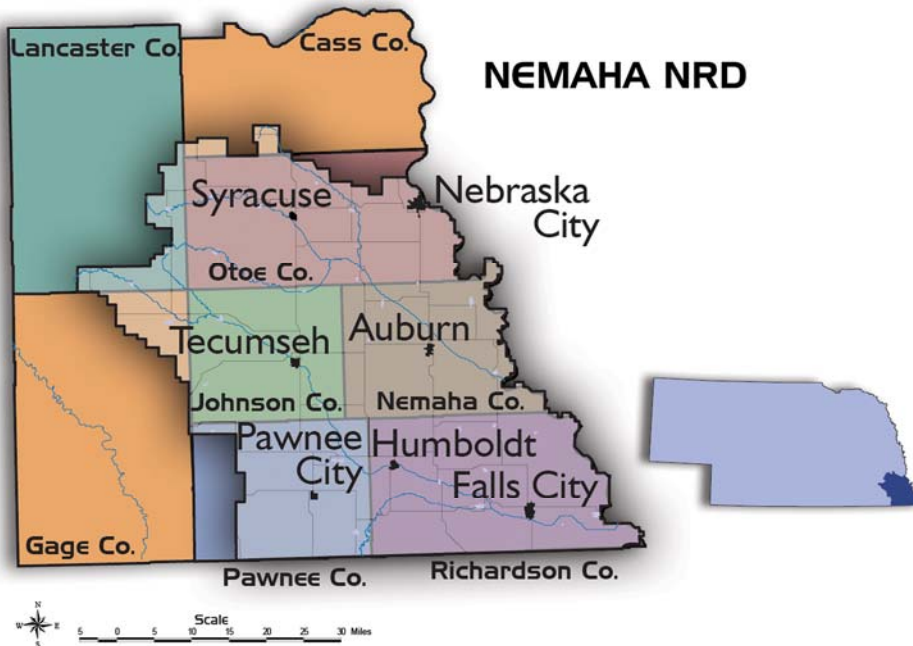
KNOW YOUR NRD



NEMAHA
Natural Resources District
Tecumseh, NE

Summer/Fall, 2009

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972



NEMAHA NRD QUICK FACTS:

- More than 470 flood control dams and erosion control structures provide 4,735 acres of permanent water & 96,862 acre feet of flood storage in the Nemaha NRD
- Over 1.4 million trees have been planted since 1977
- 117 unused wells were properly sealed in 2008-09 bringing the total closed since 1994 to over 1000!
- 4 public lakes/recreation areas and 1 hiking/biking trail are provided by the Nemaha NRD
- The Nemaha River Basin encompasses all of the Nemaha NRD and a portion of the Lower Platte South NRD in Otoe & Cass Counties

Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future

Planning for Public Safety

In an effort to ensure protection of both people and property, the Nemaha NRD has taken the lead in developing an all-hazard mitigation plan for southeast Nebraska. All counties and communities within a five-county area were invited to contribute to the plan. Potential hazards have been identified that might threaten public safety and infrastructure, and the plan will include ways to reduce or eliminate some of these threats before they occur. FEMA is helping fund 75% of the cost of the plan, and JEO Consulting is developing the plan.

NRDs were the obvious entity to take the lead since they encompass multi-county areas and deal with protecting natural resources on a daily basis. The plan is scheduled

for completion later this year and includes Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties.

Preserving the Future of Iron Horse Trail Lake

Iron Horse Trail Lake was the first multi-purpose public recreation area developed by the Nemaha NRD. Its quaint setting and excellent fishery have attracted outdoor enthusiasts since its opening in 1985. Because sediment entering the lake has begun to affect the water quality and fish habitat, the NRD is embarking on an endeavor to renovate the 85-acre lake. Efforts will include removal of sediment, adding various handicapped accessible fishing piers, and construction of in-lake fish habitat features.

In May the NRD began lowering the water level to allow the sediment to dry out, and some of the game fish have been removed and restocked into other public lakes. Now that the lake level has dropped, access to the small pools remaining is limited to foot traffic. The entire park will be closed in 2010 during construction; and by 2011 Iron Horse Trail Lake will again provide healthy, outdoor recreation opportunities for visitors to Pawnee County!



Muddy Creek Watershed Project

More work is planned in the Muddy Creek Watershed to combat severe streambank erosion that has damaged roads, bridges, pipelines, and agricultural land and impaired water quality and ecological diversity. In partnership with the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nemaha County, and local landowners, the NRD has organized funding, technical assistance, and construction for up to 20 grade and erosion structures and one road dam. So far five of the planned structures have been completed with another 8-10 to be built this year.



This project is an example of local landowners working with their local NRD to protect both private and public property. An advisory group of affected landowners has worked side by side with NRD and NRCS representatives to achieve a solution to a project that would otherwise have proven financially insurmountable.

Locally Led Watershed Management

As part of the Duck and Buck Community Based Watershed Management Plan, conservation practices are underway to proactively manage non-point sources of pollution in an effort to protect the water quality as well as the overall environmental quality of these watersheds and the reservoirs planned for them. One dam will be built on each of these creeks in the Peru area of Nemaha County with the Duck Creek site also slated to offer public recreation. Construction is expected to begin within the next year.

Once again a partnership among federal, state, and local agencies along with concerned local citizens was forged to achieve public input and support of the project. The result was a plan that offers cost-share assistance to landowners in the watersheds for such practices as cropland-to-grass conversion, flood/sediment control or grade control structures, both standard and tile outlet terraces, grassed waterways, and incentives for streamside buffers, no-till, septic system improvements, and well abandonment. Funds from federal EQIP and EPA Section 319, Nebraska Environmental Trust, and Nemaha NRD will provide anywhere from 60% to 100% of the cost of these improvements.

Groundwater Trends Rising

Spring, 2009, groundwater level measurements indicate an overall increase from spring, 2008, measurements. A network of 93 wells measured showed an average change since April, 2008, of 0.67 feet. Of these, 72 wells showed an increase with just 19 declining over the past year. Areas of largest decline were generally in eastern Otoe County near Talmage.



The Nemaha NRD recently updated its Groundwater Management Plan to better address water quantity issues. Public hearings resulted in some valuable input from those who attended, and NRD officials worked with landowners in areas with local quantity issues to achieve a plan that addresses their concerns. Ultimately the goal is to protect our water sources for the future!

Your NRD:

- Protects lives and property through flood control
 - 2 more flood control dams will soon be constructed near Peru, Nebraska, in Nemaha County
- Protects our future groundwater supplies
 - Free nitrate and bacteria testing
- Protects taxpayer dollars
 - Partnerships with other federal, state, and local entities as well as private sources supplement the property taxes collected through the Nemaha NRD's eight-county area.
 - Less than 1% of property taxes paid by local taxpayers is used by the NRD.

The Nemaha NRD:

- is one of 23 NRDs.
- is governed by a 21-member board of directors elected by the voters in 10 subdistricts.
- serves all or parts of eight counties in southeast Nebraska
- meets monthly to carry out the responsibilities charged to NRDs by the Nebraska Legislature in 1972.

Find out more about Nebraska's NRDs at www.nrdnet.org and www.nemahanrd.org