



Buck Creek Road on Track to Reopen

After many years of anticipation, the upgrading of County Road 735 where it crosses the Buck Creek reservoir will finally occur this fall. The project has a long and interesting history. When the initial plan for the Buck Creek dam was completed, it was recommended that the road be closed. After consultation with Nemaha County, the NRD agreed to revise the plan to keep the road open. As more detailed plans for the project were developed, it was learned that the high voltage power line adjacent to the road, which needed to be moved, served as a primary backup to Cooper Nuclear Station; and there were limitations on how long the line could be out of service. The problem was solved when OPPD decided to move the entire line a mile south to Highway 67. Unfortunately,



Once completed the water across the road in this photo will flow through the box culvert under the road instead.

that project was delayed until this year; so the road project was put on hold during which time it endured a major flood. With the powerline issue out of

the way, work can now proceed on the road. It is anticipated that the project, which consists of a large, concrete box culvert, will be completed by December 1st.

In Memory...

In June the Nemaha NRD bid farewell to a former, dedicated member of our staff. Carolee DeVorss passed away on June 19 at the age of 76 years. Carolee worked as the District Clerk in the Pawnee City NRCS office from 1976 to 1994 when she then transferred to the Syracuse office until her retirement in 2006.

NRD Budget Levy Takes Another Dive

A final budget of \$4.8 million received approval of the Nemaha NRD board in September, which was a 26% decrease from last fiscal year. Board members were determined not to increase the property tax asking; property valuation increases meant that the resulting levy also saw a drop from 3.17 cents last year to 3.06 cents per \$100 valuation this year.

In the midst of holding the line on property tax collections, the District continues to move forward with groundwater studies to help refine rules for its fair use. Work is underway to develop the recreation component at the Duck Creek Recreation Area near Peru, which is set to open next fall. Funds are still included for conservation cost-share work, one small, cost-share dam, four urban special projects, recreation area maintenance and improvements, and an ambitious watershed maintenance and repair schedule. For details on the approved budget, contact the NRD office (335-3325).

Have You Tried the New Dock at Kirkman's Cove?

A new boat dock was installed at Kirkman's Cove over the summer replacing the aging dock adjacent to the boat ramp. The new dock, constructed by On the Water in Fremont, is wider than the old dock making it more stable and less prone to moving during heavy wind events. The deck is made of concrete tiles that is supported by a heavy-duty steel frame. If you are wondering how something made of steel and concrete floats, you'll have to consult with your high school physics teacher.



The new dock at Kirkman's Cove installed in July, 2016

In the spirit of recycling, the NRD has moved the usable sections of the old dock to the east side of the lake near

the beach providing boaters a place to moor their vessels when accessing that portion of the recreation area. It should be noted that for safety reasons,

boats are not allowed in the beach area; and for the same reason swimming is not allowed near the boat docks.

Duck Creek Recreation Taking Shape



This road leads to a future tent camping area at the Duck Creek Recreation Area.

Work has started on the construction of the roads, parking areas, and RV pads for the Duck Creek Recreation Area. Tom Sisco Construction of Firth was awarded a \$520,000 contract to complete the work which is expected to be done in October. This is the first of three phases to install the needed facilities for the public use of the 62-acre lake. Phase Two will include the installation of water and electricity followed by Phase Three, which will include restrooms, tables, grills, playground equipment, signage, and other items. The NRD hopes to open the

park by late 2017. Use of the area and lake is not allowed until the park is officially opened.

The District has been working with the Game and Parks Commission on developing fish habitat and stocking the lake, which may begin this fall. It is also hoped that the NRD can begin permanently filling the lake prior to winter; however, there are some critical construction items that must be completed before that can occur. Initial water quality monitoring shows that the clarity of the lake far exceeds any of the other NRD lakes in southeast Nebraska.

Tree Sales Begin November 1st

Annual conservation tree seedling sales will begin on November 1 at the Nemaha NRD. Species selections and pricing have not yet been announced but should be finalized within the next few weeks. If you are interested in having the NRD plant a windbreak for you next spring, keep in mind that you should plan to work up your ground this fall for best survival. NRD staff are available to help you design your windbreak, and those orders are due no later than December 31 each year. Watch your local news media or check the NRD's website or Facebook page for the latest information.



Funds Available for Grass Buffers

Funding is available for farmers who are willing to set aside grass or riparian buffers along farm fields for anywhere from 5-10 years. The Nebraska Buffer Strip Program can be used in conjunction with the federal CRP filter strip program or by itself to fund these acres. Buffers must be at least 20 feet wide, one acre or more,

and adjacent to a currently cropped field and a stream, wetland, or other permanent water body. Payments are based upon current soil rental rates and are made annually on October 1.

To sign up for the program, visit your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today.

Fall Grass Drilling Options

The Nemaha NRD offers a couple of options for grass drilling on small plots this fall. For those requiring no-till seeding, NRD staff will begin fall drilling November 1. To qualify an application must be submitted no later than October 15 to the NRD office along with prepayment of the estimated cost for the seeding. No-till services are billed at the rate of \$22/acre with a \$100 minimum charge (subject to change), and each landowner is limited to 25 acres per year. Total acres that the NRD will drill in a season is set at 100, so the service is first-come, first-served. Landowners must provide their own seed. Spring seeding services are also offered with a deadline of March 1 for applications/payment.

If a grassland drill will do the job instead, the NRD has a Miller grassland drill available to rent at the rate of \$9/acre. A \$100 deposit is also required, and you must call ahead to reserve the drill. (The no-till drill is not available for rent but is limited to NRD custom seeding service only.) Contact the NRD at (402) 335-3325 for more information.

Steamboat Trace Renovations Nearing Completion

Work to improve drainage and trouble spots on a two-mile stretch of the Steamboat Trace is nearly complete. Kreifels Conservation & Excavating from Nebraska City reports that the area between Weldon Creek and Honey Creek south of Peru should be open for fall trail visitors in early October as long as the weather permits. This area has been prone to erosion and damage under heavy rain events, so the work will result in less maintenance and expense for this part of the trail. Check the NRD's Facebook page or website for more information on the expected completion and reopening of this segment.

Work Continues to Refine Groundwater Rules

The Nemaha NRD established the first groundwater management area in the late 1990s. Since then numerous changes have been made to rules and regulations that govern the use of groundwater across the District. As new and better data on this area's complexed aquifer system becomes available, it triggers a need to update rules. The District is presently going through this process. Initially it was thought only a small number of changes would be needed. As the board and staff began working through the process, it became evident that some major changes are needed to fairly manage groundwater district-wide.

Historically the NRD has managed groundwater the same across the entire District. After careful consideration it was decided that dividing the District into aquifer regions would be a better approach. As a result, the NRD is looking at options and developing boundaries for potential regions which will have similar characteristics and development potential. Hopefully this will allow the NRD to tailor the rules for that region to best manage and protect the groundwater resources in that area. The District anticipates initial boundaries would be developed in the next few months. Once that occurs, rules can be crafted for each region. The basic rules will be similar; however, the degree to which they are applied may differ. For example, areas with

higher risk aquifers could have a greater well spacing requirement than in a low risk area. Rules cannot be subjective and must be supported by science, which is why data collection is so important.

As part of the updating process, the NRD has hired Leggette, Brashears and Graham, a nationwide environmental and groundwater engineering firm. They are working on providing updated groundwater aquifer maps utilizing data provided by the NRD and State. Much of the data has been collected or created after the development of any previous groundwater mapping so the result should be a far more accurate picture of the region's aquifer. It is hoped that they can have the entire District completed in the next 12 to 18 months.

As any rule changes are proposed, the NRD will make information available to local media outlets and on our webpage. State statutes require that public hearings be held before changes to the District's rules can be finalized. This is the public's opportunity to provide comments supporting or opposing any or all changes.

ATTENTION CHEMIGATORS:

This is a reminder to inspect & drain any water from your mainline check valve and low-pressure drain to prevent freezing and cracking over the winter months.

Blue-Green Algae Pesky Again this Summer

Iron Horse Trail Lake and Kirkman's Cove both have a long history of blue-green algae problems. Typically, we see one or two major blooms throughout the summer months; however, this summer it was far more problematic as the algae essentially was around all summer. With some minor exceptions, the hot, humid, calm weather was fairly consistent throughout the summer, which may have helped contribute to the problem. The NRD samples our four recreation lakes every Monday during the summer, and the samples are shipped to Lincoln for analysis. Results are provided to the District late Thursday afternoon. If a waterbody is placed on health alert, activities such as swimming and water skiing are not allowed. The waterbody must have a clean bill of health for two consecutive weeks to be taken off of health alert status. Algae levels can change dramatically in a short periods of time, so users of any waterbody should use common sense and avoid contact with the

water if conditions look questionable. Pets are particularly vulnerable because they will drink the water versus limited body contact. Information on the status of the NRD's lakes can be found on our website, Facebook page, or by calling the NRD office. Signs are also posted at key locations around the District's recreation lakes.

The name "blue-green algae" is a misnomer as it actually is a type of cyanobacteria that resembles algae. It commonly occurs in waterbodies throughout the world including those as big as the Great Lakes. Although cyanobacteria has been around since the beginning of time, greater awareness of the problem has brought it to the forefront in recent years. The blue-green algae itself is not toxic, but as it dies it releases the toxin that causes the problem. There are control methods available; however, they are typically only cost effective on smaller lakes less than 10 acres in size.

NEMAHA NRD STAFF

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Jane Kuhl, Administrative Assistant
Karen Mahoney, Administrative Assistant
Lisa Bartels, Secretary
Chuck Wingert, Water Resources Manager
Charlie Pierce, Water Resources Technician
Steve Bartels, Field Representative
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Phil Vance, Doug Schmidt, and Micah Scholl,
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NRD STAFF IN NRCS OFFICES

Alice Alexander, Auburn
Glenda Bates, Tecumseh
Kim Zech, Syracuse
Monica Dishong, Falls City
Kathy Harlow, Pawnee City

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Charles Duryea, Humboldt
James Gerweck, Falls City
Orval Gigstad, Syracuse
Dave Guhde, Nebraska City
Dan Hodges, Julian (VICE-CHAIR)
Doug Iske, Dunbar
Jenny Kearney, Nebraska City
Jon Keithley, Falls City
Timothy Loseke, Hickman
Michael McDonald, Palmyra
Russel Moss, Burr
William Niedfeldt, Shubert
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Don Siske, Table Rock
Mike Speece, Auburn
Dan Stukenholtz, Brock
J. Duane Sugden, Sterling
Steve Sugden, Adams (CHAIR)
Kevin Thorne, Nebraska City

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General Election is Coming Soon

With all the hype of this year's Presidential election, you might not have realized that Nemaha NRD directors are also on your election ballot this fall. Your choice may be a little easier, however, since there are no contested races in this year's election. A board of 21 members oversees the Nemaha NRD's operations, and half of these folks are elected every other year to four-year terms. Two slots are vacant since no one filed, and the incumbents chose not to run again. (All others on the ballot this year are incumbents.)

Subdistrict	Candidate
1	Vacant-No candidates filed
2	Michael McDonald, Palmyra
3	Orval Gigstad, Syracuse
4	Daniel Hodges, Julian
4	Jenny Kearney, Nebraska City*
5	David Guhde, Nebraska City
5	Kevin Thorne, Nebraska City*
6	Robbie Bohling, Johnson
7	Mike Speece, Auburn
8	Vacant – No candidates filed
9	Jon Keithley, Falls City
10	James Gerweck, Falls City
10	Alan Romine, Falls City*

*According to State law, these positions are electing for their remaining two-year term since vacancies were filled during the first 19 months of the term.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



September

- 22 Keeping Nebraska Local on NETW – 7:00 p.m.
- 25 Keeping Nebraska Local on NETW – 1:00 p.m.
- 25-27 NARD Annual Conference, Kearney
- 28 State Range Judging Contest, Lancaster County

October

- 5 Area Land Judging Contest, Tecumseh
- 10 Columbus Day Holiday, NNRD Office Closed
- 13 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh – 8:00 p.m.

November

- 8 Election Day – Don't Forget to Vote!
- 10 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh – TBA
- 11 Veterans Day Holiday, NNRD Office Closed
- 12-20 Steamboat Trace Closed during Firearm Deer Season
- 24 Thanksgiving Holiday, NNRD Office Closed

December

- 8 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh – TBA
- 26 Christmas Holiday, NNRD Office Closed



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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