

## Local Students Advance to State, National Competitions

A five-member team from Norris High School earned their way to the State Envirothon contest held at Niobrara State Park on April 25. They placed first in their region earlier this spring to advance to the state contest along with 13 other teams from across Nebraska. Team members Gus Woeppel, Sage Ehlers, Adam Essink, Nate Wheeler, and Carter Rohrer competed in seven different environmental testing stations during the contest: soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, range, natural resources policy, and a special oral presentation about range challenges in Nebraska. Though they didn't bring home the gold, they scored well enough to earn 8th place overall.

Four high school FFA students from Johnson County Central earned a trip to the National Land Judging Contest in Oklahoma City the first week of May. Gabi Alvarado, Connor Bartels, Sam Buss, and Nick Goracke teamed up to tie for 28th place out of 100 teams. Nick Goracke led the team by placing 3rd individually out of 390 competitors while Connor Bartels placed in the top 1/3 of the pack! Land judging challenges contestants to determine physical features, management practices, and land capability in a hands-on setting.

Congratulations to both the Norris and Johnson County Central team members on their accomplishments!

## Watershed of Wonders - June 20

It's not too late to sign up for this year's Watershed of Wonders day camp at Iron Horse Trail Lake. The event is open to all 10-12 year olds and will take place on Wednesday, June 20. Participants will spend the day learning to fish, taking a boat ride, honing their archery skills, shooting water rockets, and even winding

their way through an amazing water race. Lunch, snacks, prizes, and an official 2018 Watershed of Wonders t-shirt are provided for everyone attending. There's no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required. Access the registration form on our website: [www.nemahanrd.org](http://www.nemahanrd.org), or by calling the office (402-335-3325).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



### June

- 2 Duck Creek Recreation Area Grand Opening/Dedication
- 11-12 NARD Basin Tour, LPSNRD & Nemaha NRD
- 14 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 20 Watershed of Wonders @ Iron Horse Trail Lake

### July

- 4 Independence Day Holiday, NNRD Office Closed
- 12 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 22-26 National Envirothon, Idaho

### August

- 9 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 24-9/3 Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island



# Insight



Spring 2018

## Duck Creek Recreation Area Ready for Visitors



Winter weather extending far into spring created some challenges for staff and contractors as they tried to get the new Duck Creek Recreation Area ready for public use. The day-use area was opened on April 16th and already has proven to be popular with users. Anglers and kayakers are now a common sight almost any time of the week. Boating is limited to 5 MPH no wake, and caution should always be used because there are numerous obstacles both below and above the water surface.

Anglers have reported success catching fish both from boats and along the bank. A reminder that there is a 21-inch take limit on largemouth bass, and all other state fishing regulations and limits apply. Recent fish surveys by Game and Parks indicated that most bass were in the 15 to 16-inch range with none meeting the take requirement. Possession of live baitfish is also

not allowed. Duck Creek has the potential to be one of the highest quality fishing lakes in eastern Nebraska, so every effort is being made to promote that goal. Introducing fish species, even those considered desirable, can have a long-term, negative impact on the overall fisheries.

Weekends are expected to be busy, and users are encouraged to use common courtesy when enjoying the area. Area rules are posted throughout the park. Although open, the area is still a work in progress; so users can expect some inconveniences throughout the summer. Grass establishment has been particularly challenging at the site, so avoiding newly or sparsely seeded areas would be appreciated. Annual or daily vehicle entry permits are required at Duck Creek, and they may be purchased at the park, online, or at the NRD

office in Tecumseh.

Campers will find 28 electric RV sites and a few non-electric pads that are located in the primitive campground. The NRD does not take reservations; so everything is first-come, first-served. Camping pads must be occupied by an attended recreational vehicle and cannot be blocked or "reserved" using cars, boats, utility trailers, tents, or any other objects.

### Dedication and Grand Opening of Duck Creek

Duck Creek Recreation Area is one component, but the most visible part, of the Buck and Duck Creek Watershed Project. In addition to the recreation provided, the overall project included the installation of two flood control dams, upgrade of three county roads, and helped install over \$3 million in conservation practices throughout the watershed. (Please note that the Buck Creek lake is not open to the public, and anyone without permission would be trespassing.)

On June 2nd the NRD will celebrate the completion of the combined Buck and Duck Creek project with the dedication and grand opening of the Duck Creek Recreation Area. A dedication ceremony begins at 11:00 A.M. followed by a free lunch (while the food lasts) and family oriented, fun activities in the afternoon. Those planning to visit the park that weekend should be aware that there will be restrictions on access or use of some areas. Check our website for more details.



**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

## Iron Horse Trail Lake

In recent years we have seen a significant increase in use at Iron Horse Trail Lake. This is largely due to improvements made to the area over the past seven years including lake renovations, upgrading the camping areas, improving the beach, and adding a trail around the 80-acre lake. This year boaters will be greeted by a new dock at the boat ramp. Cost to replace the old floating dock was around \$14,000.

Unfortunately, a few weeks after the dock was installed it was damaged by vandals. The damage, which was estimated at \$1,500, was quickly repaired. Anyone witnessing vandalism at any of our five recreation areas is encouraged to report it to the local sheriff. It is difficult to catch the responsible people without information provided by a witness. If possible, try to make note of vehicle license plate numbers.

## Steamboat Trace Trail

The 22-mile Steamboat Trace trail continues to be a popular attraction for hikers and bikers in the area. We get visitors from across the country who use the trail, and they often comment about the unique experience of riding along the river and sandstone bluffs.

Much of the trail is remote, which is another reason for its popularity; unfortunately, this also makes it subject to problems such as vandalism and illegal use by motor vehicles. The section of trail north of

Brownville has long been a problem area. If you witness acts of vandalism or illegal activities, please report it to the county sheriff along with any helpful information such as vehicle description or license plates.

For those interested in making donations to the trail, we are in the process of transitioning to an electronic donation method. This will replace the envelopes and collection boxes at the trailheads. Watch our website for this option coming soon.

# Duck Creek Recreation Area – Now Open!

## Grand Opening June 2, 2018

### Duck Creek Facilities & Amenities:

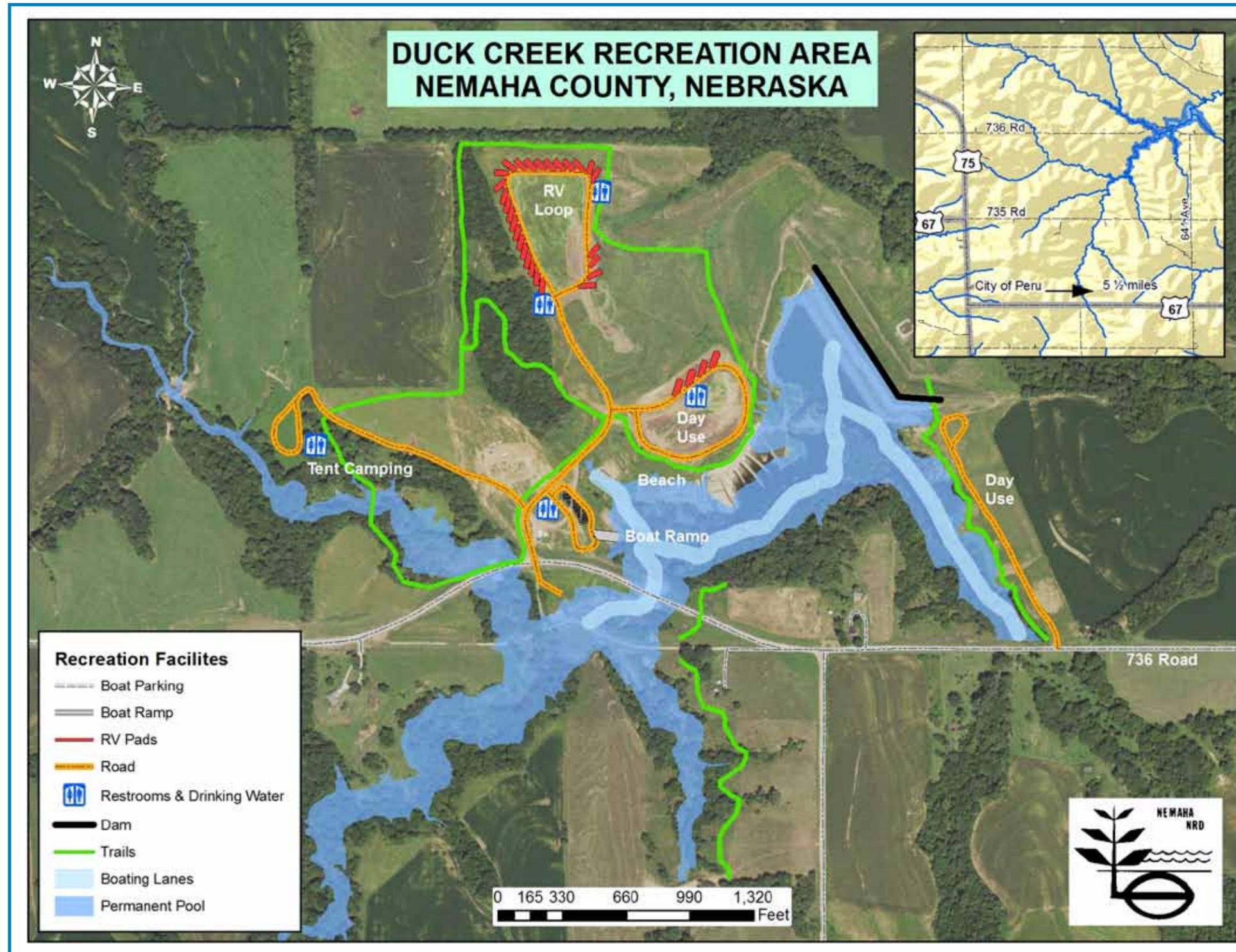
- 60-acre no-wake lake
- Sand Beach
- Fishing (21" limit on bass; all other State fishing regulations apply)
- Boat dock & ramp
- RV Camping (28 electrical pads @ \$12/night; some primitive spots)
- Tent Camping
- 2 Picnic Shelters
- Grills, fire rings, picnic tables
- 2 Playgrounds
- Pit-style Outhouses
- Drinking Water
- Nature Trail

### Duck Creek Project Costs

Land Rights	\$1,480,000
Dam Construction	\$1,320,000
Recreation Area	\$1,100,000
Roads & Bridges	\$1,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,900,000</b>

### Duck Creek Project Funding

P.L. 566 Watershed Fund	\$1,230,000
Sport Fish Restoration Fund	\$ 500,000
Nebraska Resources Development Fund	\$1,600,000
Nemaha County	\$ 300,000
Nemaha NRD	\$1,270,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,900,000</b>



### Grand Opening Schedule

- 9:30 Gates open to designated parking areas/shuttles run all day until 4:00
- 11:00 Official Dedication Ceremony
- 12:00 Lunch served by Peru Community Impact Group (while supplies last)
- 12:30-3:30 Family friendly activities:
  - Facility Tours
  - Boat Rides
  - Kayak Checkout
  - Fishing Demo
  - Informational Displays
  - Games

- ❖ NNRD vehicle entry permits will not be required during the event.
- ❖ Bring your lawn chair or blanket
- ❖ In case of inclement weather, dedication ceremony may move to Peru State College Student Center. Check our website, Facebook, or call our office for a recorded message.

### NEMAHA NRD OFFICE:


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Nemaha NRD vehicle entry permit is required at Duck Creek Recreation Area (except during grand opening) as well as at Iron Horse Trail Lake, Kirkman's Cove, and Wirth Brothers Lake. Annual permits are available for purchase online or in person at the NRD office; daily permits are available at each park. Prices: Annual \$15; 2nd Annual \$8; Daily \$5.