



www.mnrnd.org
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Order your trees now! 25 species of trees and shrubs are available for your shelter belts, home landscaping, wildlife habitat corners or farmstead wind break. Improve your environment, plant TREES!



SINCE 1972: protecting the natural resources of the district and assisting landowners in planning, funding, and applying conservation practices.

SPRINKLES & SPLASHES

FALL 2007 THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT VOL. 17 NO. 4

Plan Now, Plant in the Spring

Trees Are On Sale Now

Plan now, order now. The deadline is March 1, 2008 but don't wait 'till then to order your trees or shrubs. Ordering now ensures that you will get the trees and shrubs that you want.

Bare root trees and shrubs are available in bundles of 25 per species at \$15.50 per bundle. Regular potted trees are \$51.00 per 30 and \$30.00 per 30 for small potted trees plus state and local taxes.

We will be offering at least seven conifer species, six broadleaves and 13 shrub species this year. We are not offering Green Ash because of concerns about the green Ash Borer Beetle in the East. We are also no longer offering Russian Olive because of its invasive nature. Other species that we are not carrying this year are Willow Diamond, Mnc Apricot and Chokeberry. You can view a complete list of

trees and shrubs available on our order form available on our website. Click on 'Services' and look for the Order Form link under the heading 'Forestry and Wildlife.'

Trees will arrive in April. We will call and notify you when the trees have arrived and are ready for pick up. Your trees will be wrapped tightly in heavy paper bags or boxes with moistened wood shavings and stored in a dark, cool environment.

Tree selection....

The chart *above left* summarizes some of the values to consider when selecting tree and shrub species for your property. There are other values and characteristics to consider during selection such as soil type, pH, drainage, and slope of your site. Some species such as silver maple grow quickly but can become brittle towards old age. For each value in the chart

Tree & Shrub Species	Plant Values				
	Wildlife	Energy Savings	Soil Conservation	Landscaping	Drought Resistance
CO Blue Spruce	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX	X
Ponderosa Pine	XXX	XX	XX	X	XXX
Rocky Mtn Juniper	XXX	X	XX	XX	XXX
Bur Oak	XXX	XX	X	XX	XXX
Hackberry	XXX	X	X	XX	XX
Cottonwood	X	X	X	XX	
Black Locust	X	X	X	XX	XX
Buffaloberry	XX		XX	XX	XX
Golden Currant	XX		XX	XXX	XX

From Dan's Desk...

Wednesday's decision by the Nebraska Supreme Court to not hear the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of LB 701 does not impact the responsibility the

natural resources districts (NRDs) have in managing Nebraska's ground water resources. It is important that the public understand two very important points: 1) The irrigation districts

who sold their water to the NRDs are going to get paid; 2) The NRDs purchased water in order to maintain the economic activity of our basin -- Continued on Page 3

above, one X means fair, XX equals good and XXX equals excellent. These values are based on information from the Colorado State Forest Service publication *Trees for Conservation: A Buyers Guide*. Contact the NRD Office for more information or recommendations for your particular site. ♦

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Congratulations to Area III Range Judging Competition Teams

September 27th turned out to be a perfect day to be outside for examining, identifying and evaluating range and range plants. Marty Gugelman, of the Frontier CO. NRCS Office, organized the outdoor portion of this year's Range Judging Competition for Area III. In addition to having ideal weather, this year's moisture contributed to much improved range condition and range plant diversity for use during the competition.

Two hundred and fifteen participants from 11 Schools, making up 60 Teams, participated in this

year's Range Judging Competition. Four divisions were represented on September 27th. Two hundred students made up both Junior and Senior Divisions. Fifteen participants competed in the adult and professional divisions.

Winners:

In the Senior Team Division Hayes Center FFA had a strong presence this year with 7 teams participating and four of those teams placing in both divisions combined. Their first place team had a combined score of 1376 earned by Luke Clifford, Matt Gohl and Austin Lawson and their

second place team scored 1356. An Arapahoe team took home third place, Wauneta-Palisade placed fourth and a Medicine Valley team placed 5th. Congratulations go to a team from S-E-M (Sumner-Eddyville-Miller High) FFA for taking first place in the Junior Team Division with a combined score of 1329 followed by Hayes Center with a combined score of 1132. The S-E-M team included Dylan Smith, Ben Trampe, Alec Ibach and Evan Ibach. Arapahoe FFA took third place and another team from Hayes Center followed with fourth place. Finally, the top four

ranking student competitors in the Individual Division beginning with first place were Dylan Smith of S-E-M, Taylor Ruppert of Hayes Center, Ben Trampe of S-E-M and Alec Ibach of S-E-M. From our District, Blaine Richter placed 8th, Molly Cox placed 11th and Peter Sonckson placed 24th out of 113, all from Hayes Center.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture provided the setting for participant registration, lunch and the awards ceremony. David Smith, Ag Professor with NCTA, organized student tours and demonstrations for the visiting students as part of the educational component of the day. Valuable assistance was also received from Bill

Carhart of the Twin Platt NRD and staff from the MRNRD for assisting with registration, scoring and the awards ceremony. Jeff Nichols of the Lincoln CO. NRCS Office assisted Marty with the field site selection and set-up. Steve Melvin and Barbara Sharf of UNL's Extension Office in Frontier CO. assisted with registration and scoring. The field office secretaries from Frontier CO. (Doris Burke), Hayes CO. (Kathy Barger), and Hitchcock CO. (Carol Lashley) also assisted with scoring.

Lastly, we would not have Range Judging Competitions if it were not for the commitment of the Agriculture Educators throughout the state. ♦
Fantastic weather has fol-

SW Area Land Judging Competition Results

lowed every District educational event so far this year with the Southwest Area Land Judging event being no exception. This year's event was hosted by the Middle Republican NRD, Red Willow CO. NRCS and the Red Willow CO. Fairgrounds Board.

174 students from nine schools competed in the 2007 Southwest Area Land Judging Contest held in McCook on October 10. High school FFA students

were tested on their knowledge of soil, it's texture and permeability, land use and land capability. The top finisher was Derek Hammer from Franklin High School. The top team was also from Franklin.

Teams from Wilcox-Hildreth and Arapahoe High School also qualified for the State Land Judging Contest held October 31 in Arapahoe. Winners in the individual division that reside within the District are

Jared Aden and Calvin Rupe, both of Eustis-Farnam. They won a blue and red ribbon respectively. Ethan Jones of Medicine Valley was a red ribbon winner.

After the contest and before awards were presented, students were treated to tours of the 3 Star Dairy courtesy of Wendy and Rick Roberts and tours of the Nebraska Bull Service facility courtesy of Brian and Donetta Schafer. The contest site was provided by Don and Aggie Roberts and the soil profile pits were dug by Mark Moorhous of Moorhous Irrigation and Trenching of Culbertson.

The top finisher in the adult division was David Rocker, Franklin FFA Teacher.

Nebraska's Agricultural Education teachers contrib-

uted to the contest's success. The Red Willow County Fairgrounds Board provided the site for registration, lunch and the awards presentation. ♦



- Continued from **Dan's Desk** on Page 1

Economic Activity of Republican Basin Is of Paramount Importance to NRD

and not to meet any requirements of an intrastate compact.

By statute, NRDs are responsible for ground water management and they will continue to use the tools provided by the legislature to manage that resource. Any future lawsuits may impact how – but not if – the NRDs will pay the irrigation districts who cooperated with us in selling their surface water rights last summer. The bonding authority of LB 701 would have been used to pay that obligation. That obligation will be met, if not with the authority of

LB 701, then with whatever funding the NRDs now have or may obtain in the future.

This new bonding authority is very important to the overall economic security of the Republican River Basin. Without the ability to purchase or lease either surface or ground water supplies during droughts in the future, the only option available to the NRDs is to drastically reduce ground water use over the long term. Short-term reductions do little to make up for drought, so severe long-term reductions in water use over many years

would have to be imposed. This would have a devastating effect on the entire economy of the basin. The bonding authority gave us the opportunity to lease these supplies or implement other programs to help replace the impacts from ground water pumping and minimize the economic impact of regulation on ground water. The surface water we leased this year helps make up for the effects of drought in the previous water-short years from 2003 through 2006.

LB 701 had the support of the entire Legislature, the Governor and the NRDs.

Many citizens prefer this legislative solution as an alternative to crippling reductions in ground water use. While neither option is overwhelmingly desirable, the bonding authority for the NRDs is the least painful because it still allows our farmers to achieve the maximum economic potential for their crops. Irrigated agriculture is important to the entire basin. No one likes more taxes but the long-term impacts of severe water use reductions would have negative impacts across all segments of our population.

To maintain that this is a State issue and that the State should take care of it financially is likely to result in a response from the State that could result

in complete administration and nearly eliminate ground water irrigation. Only by having a local input and local controls can we maintain the maximum benefit to the basin. If Nebraska fails to achieve compliance with the Compact and Kansas pursues further litigation, the response from the United States Supreme Court may very well be the stopping of all irrigation, both ground water and surface water, until the deficit is reversed. State control or court control of the resources of this basin cannot be to the benefit of anyone. We would hope that the plaintiffs give LB 701 a chance to work and protect the economic security of our basin. ♦

District Flood Control Structures Receive Maintenance

Of the 45 flood control structures in our district, four suffered minor damage as a result of the heavy Spring rains: Structures 410 and 390-B just off of SH 83 south of Maywood, 80-A just north of Maywood and 370 between Curtis and Maywood. However, all 45 structures did their job this Spring.

Two sink holes and a seep were found on structure 80-A. The sinkholes are

about 6 to 8 feet wide and between 1 to 2 feet deep. Their presence is a complete mystery. These depressions are located near the cement and steel structure that is the primary spillway. On the opposite side of the dam and at a higher elevation is a spot where water is seeping out from within the structure. Another mystery.

Engineers inspected the structures and determined

that the damage is a result of a design flaw, making the cost of repairs to this structure eligible for federal aid. At this time, we do not know whether federal aid will be available.

Structures 410 and 390-B suffered erosion around the primary spillways (See Photo). These structures were also covered with large trees and branches, threatening to block or slow water flow during the next flood event. The high waters achieved at these flood control structures approached within feet of the secondary spillways, lifting and carrying huge

debris and setting it down on the dam and spillway structures. Also, as the water receded and flowed through the outflow structures, the current and eddies that formed around the spillway structures removed soil from the base. MRNRD staff made re-

pairs using concrete bags to fill in and stabilize the holes created by the floodwaters. Staff also cleaned up the large debris by cutting up the tree carcasses and limbs with chainsaws and removing the material from the flood control area. ♦



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Calendar of Events

visit: www.mrnrd.org/calendar

November	22	Thanksgiving Day – Office Closed
December	11	Board of Directors Meeting & Luncheon, Curtis
	25	Christmas – Office Closed
January	01	New Year's Day – Office Closed
	8th	Board of Directors Meeting
	21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February	5 -6	Legislative Conference, Lincoln
	12	Board of Directors Meeting
	18	President's Day – Office Closed

The Natural Resources Conservation Service reminds everyone that Dec. 14, 2007 will be the cutoff date for funding EQIP applications. Contact your local NRCS Office.

Board of Directors: Joseph Anderjaska, Hayes Center; Kevin Fornoff, Hayes Center; Josh Friesen, Wallace; Gayle Haag, Bartley; Ben Loomis, Maywood; Stanley Moore, Bartley; Jerry Mustion, Culbertson; Dan Nelsen, Moorefield; Brad Randel, Indianola; Marty Schurr, Maywood; and Rick Spencer, Culbertson

MRNRD Office: General Manager, Daniel Smith; Assistant Manager, Robert Merrigan; Office Supervisor, Stacie Owens; Secretary / Receptionist, Mary Tidyman; Information & Education Coordinator, Roger Lawson; Technical Supervisor, Rich Karre; Technicians, Tom Hansen and Dennis Peterson

NRCS Field Office Clerks: Frontier County, Doris Burke; Hayes County, Kathy Barger; Hitchcock County, Carol Lashley; Lincoln County, Kathy Clark; Red Willow County, Betty Fritsch

REMINDER TO IRRIGATORS:

Water meters must be permanently attached to your wells by the end of 2007. (Groundwater Management Area Rules & Regs. 4-4.10)

SPRINKLES & SPLASHES is the official publication of the Middle Republican Natural Resources District. It is published quarterly by the MRNRD, 220 Center Av., PO Box 81, Curtis, NE 69025. We can be reached at 800-873-5613, 308-367-4281, Email: office@mrnrd.org or www.mrnrd.org.

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