

PARENTS & STUDENTS! Apply now for the Middle Republican NRD College Scholarship Program. Applicants are eligible to receive \$200 toward the cost of their post-high school education. Summer campers can earn a scholarship to cover the entire cost of camp! See page 7 for details.

CHEMIGATION Chemigation permit renewal deadline is April 15 this year. See page 2 for details.

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SPRINKLES & SPLASHES

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

WINTER 2007

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

VOL. 17 NO. 1

SW Nebraska Water Conference

21 years of water

The 21st annual Southwest Nebraska Water Conference will be held Thursday, March 1, 2007 at the Red Willow County Fairgrounds Community Building in McCook. Registration will begin at 8:30 AM with the first session starting at 9:00 AM.

This year's conference focuses on the many special projects and initiatives undertaken in the last year to address groundwater management in the district.

Representatives from Senator Ben Nelson's office, the University of Nebraska — Lincoln, SunOpta, Southwest Nebraska RC&D, and the Middle and Upper Republican NRDs will talk about projects that utilize both innovative and traditional strategies to better manage the

water we have and to send water downstream

District producers Frank and Patricia Stehno will be honored as the recipients of the 2006 Middle Republican NRD Honor Conservation Award.

Lunch will be provided by the Middle Republican NRD for all who attend. Sponsors for this year's conference are Red Willow County and Frontier County Extension, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Middle Republican NRD.

The Southwest Nebraska Water Conference began in 1987 as a means to educate irrigators who had water quality problems. During the lawsuit with Kansas, the conference served to update people on the progress of the

Water Conference Agenda

MCs:	Kent Been & Kara Gall	11:45	NRD 2006 Honor Conservation Award: Frank & Patricia Stehno Family <i>Kara Gall, MRNRD and Award Sponsors: McCook National Bank, United Agri Products, and Frenchman Valley Co-op</i>
8:30	Registration Coffee and Rolls		
9:00	Welcome & Introduction <i>Josh Friesen, Kara Gall, Middle Republican NRD</i>		
9:15	Pumping Plant Efficiency <i>Derrel Martin, University of Nebraska—Lincoln</i>	12:00	Lunch - Courtesy of Middle Republican NRD
10:00	Irrigation Scheduling <i>Steve Melvin, University of Nebraska—Lincoln</i>	12:30	Water Issues and Washington <i>Senator Ben Nelson's Office, John Berge</i>
10:45	Break, Meet the Exhibitors	1:00	Riparian Project Update <i>Roger Stockton, Southwest NE RC&D</i>
11:00	NRD Update - EQIP Special Initiative and 2006 Water Usage <i>Middle Republican NRD, Daniel Smith</i>	1:30	CSP <i>University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Tom Franty</i>
11:30	Sunflower Production <i>SunOpta, Mike Bretz</i>	2:00	Augmentation Study <i>Jasper Fanning, Upper Republican NRD</i>
		2:30	Remote Meter Reading Project <i>Kara Gall, Middle Republican NRD</i>

lawsuit. In the coming years, the conference aims to educate producers on integrated management, bringing to the table the combination of information and practical application suggestions that irrigators and professionals can implement in their businesses. ♦

Exhibitors Include:

GREAT PLAINS METER • SENNINGER IRRIGATION •
SOUTHWEST IMPLEMENT & REINKE • SUNOPTA •
VALLEY PRO • NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS •
MOORHOUS IRRIGATION & SUPPLY • TRI CITY METERS
• COREY IRRIGATION & SUBSURFACE DRIP • NEBRASKA
FOREST SERVICE • MIDDLE & UPPER REPUBLICAN NRDs

From Dan's Desk

Future allocation reductions are unknown

Last December, the four Republican Basin NRDs held a meeting in McCook with Governor Heineman and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Since that meeting, the most common question being asked is, "What's the new allocation going to be?"

The answer is we don't know yet.

DNR proposed an allocation of 4.5 inches in the quick response

area and 9 inches for the upland wells. Nothing that has been provided from the Department shows me that these kinds of reductions will provide for compliance with the compact by the end of this year. Those reductions won't reduce Nebraska's uses below acceptable levels for at least five years.

Because of the drought, supplies have been below normal for the basin and while ground water pumping has been reduced from its

historical average, the impact from pumping still exceeds the supply. Along with the other regular uses in the basin, overall ground water use is projected to exceed supplies again in 2006.

This NRD will continue to meet with the State over the next few months to determine what choices make the best sense for the basin. Allocations may be reduced, and other programs may be initiated that might augment the supply.

As we get closer to making a decision, we will schedule some public meetings to put forth proposals and gather input. Many of you have called asking for guidance. I wish I could give you more definitive answers. This process will take a little more time. We want to make sure that our decisions are based on the best, most accurate information available and that they impose the least economic impact.

Keep an eye out for the agenda for the March 1 water conference in McCook. We hope to have a day full of

presentations that will be of benefit to all producers.

We say goodbye to two employees this winter. Kim Smith, our Curtis NRCS secretary and Kara Gall, our Information and Education Specialist have moved on to other jobs. We thank them for their hard work while they were with us and wish them the best in their new positions. Doris Burke has been hired to replace Kim and we are in the process of finding a replacement for Kara.

~ Dan Smith,
General Manager

April 15 deadline to renew Chemigation Permits

Forms were mailed in late February

This year, when April 15 rolls around, don't just think tax time; think Chemigation.

If you are an operator of a chemigation system, you are required to obtain a permit before chemigating.

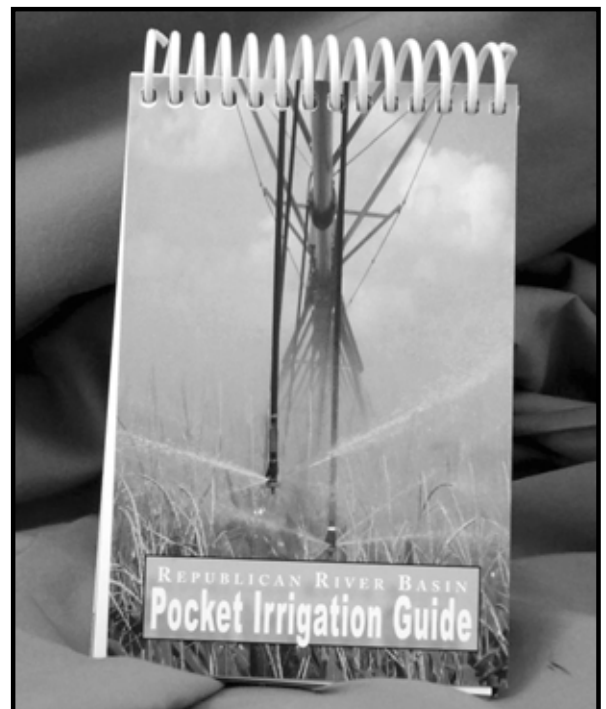
For those of you with pre-existing permits, forms to renew those permits were mailed to you in late February. If you intend to chemigate this season, you must fill

out the form and mail it back to the Middle Republican NRD office in Curtis by April 15, 2007.

Please check the expiration date on your chemigation applicator's license. If it expired January 1, 2007 and you plan to chemigate this year, you must register for a chemigation class this spring. The last date you can take this class for 2007 is May 24, 2007, in North Platte.

You can find information regarding training dates and locations by logging on to www.deq.state.ne.us or by contacting the MRNRD office at (800) 873-5613.

And finally, don't forget to use the section on Chemigation in your Pocket Irrigation Guide as a resource. The guide will be mailed to all irrigators along with their 2006 water usage reports. ♦



The Middle Republican NRD's pocket irrigation guide contains a section on Chemigation, including certification requirements, safety considerations, and worksheets for calibrating a center pivot system.

Conservation Awards

NRD Now Accepting Nominations

Do you know someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to improve the environment through conservation, has looked to the future through environmental education efforts, or has gone the extra mile to increase wild-life habitat? If you do, now is your chance to recognize their efforts by nominating them to receive a Conservation Award from the Middle Republican Natural Resources District. We are now accepting nominations for the 2007 Conservation Awards.

Any individual, group, or

organization within the MRNRD can be nominated for an award. This District includes Red Willow, Hitchcock, Hayes, Frontier, and the lower 1/3 of Lincoln County. Nominations close May 1, 2007. Please contact the Middle Republican NRD for a nomination form, or visit our web site at <http://www.mrnrd.org/awards.html> to fill out a nomination form. You may be contacted for further information about your nomination. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the NRD at (800) 873-5613. ♦

District Headlines

Water Usage Reports

Many of you have been calling in, wondering about your water usage for 2006. MRNRD Technicians have finished reading meters in Hayes, Hitchcock, and Lincoln counties. This year's inclement weather has slowed down the meter reading process considerably. We are doing our best to finish reading meters, even as the weather continues to pose significant challenges. In the meantime, if you need to know your water usage, you may call the office at (800) 873-5613 and ask for Christy.

Starting your Meters this Spring

When you start up your wells this spring, pay special attention to your meter. If your meter is leaking, please call the district office immediately and ask to speak to a technician. Leaking meters mean water lost that you could be using on your crop!

Mid-Plains Regional Envirothon

Nearly 60 students, teachers, and presenters attended the 3rd Annual Mid-Plains Regional Envirothon training session in McCook on January 31, 2007. The training session is designed to give students an edge at the Regional competition by creating opportunities for them to work as a team with area specialists in the Envirothon topics: range, soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry, policy, and an annual special topic. Students will compete for a spot at the state competition on February 28, 2007 in Curtis.

Students & Parents, Apply Now for Scholarship Money

College and Camp Scholarships Available from NRD

Are you a resident of the Middle Republican NRD? Are you planning to major in an agricultural or natural resources field?

Apply now for the Middle Republican NRD College Scholarship Program. Applicants are eligible to receive \$200 toward the cost of their post-high education.

Preference will be given to applicants who plan to major in a natural resources or agriculture related field and to those attending McCook

Community College or the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. The Middle Republican

NRD Board of Directors will make the final award decision.

The Middle Republican NRD also awards scholarships to high school students residing within the District who attend natural resource-related summer camps. Scholarships are available to students attending the Nebraska Range Youth Camp, or the Sandhills Academy at 4-H Camp.

One scholarship from each of the five counties in the MRNRD is available each year and the scholarship amount is equal to the camp registration fee.

College applications are due April 2, 2007. Summer camp applications are due May 1, 2007.

Call (800) 873-5613 to have an application for either scholarship mailed to you or apply online at <http://www.mrnrd.org/programs/education/scholarships/scholarships.html>. ♦



Left: Students applying for MRNRD Scholarships must reside in the above shaded area. Please note that portions of Lincoln and Frontier counties are NOT in the Middle Republican NRD. Call us if you have questions.

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Calendar of Events

visit: www.mrnrd.org/calendar

February	13	Board of Directors Meeting, Curtis, 7:30 PM
	19	President's Day, Office Closed
	28	Mid-Plains Regional Envirothon, NCTA, Curtis
March	1	Southwest NE Water Conference, McCook
	13	Board of Directors Meeting, McCook
April	2	College Scholarship Applications Due
	10	Board of Directors Meeting, Curtis
	27	Arbor Day
	29	Soil & Water Stewardship Week
May	1	Honor Conservation Nominations Due; Summer Camp Scholarship Applications Due
	5	Nebraska State Envirothon, Fort Robinson
	8	Board of Directors Meeting, McCook
	8	Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival, Grand Island
	28	Memorial Day, Office Closed

Visit us on the web at:
<http://www.mrnrd.org>

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, Christy Peterson; Secretary / Receptionist, Mary Tidyman; Information & Education Coordinator, Kara Gall; 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

The Middle Republican NRD continues to accept orders for trees for the upcoming tree planting season. Orders will be accepted for both machine and hand plants. Some species of trees are also limited. Contact Mary at the MRNRD office to place your order!

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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