

Middle Republican Natural  
Resources District  
220 Center Avenue  
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www.mrnrd.org



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## Calendar of Events

visit: [www.mrnrd.org/calendar](http://www.mrnrd.org/calendar)

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Aug 10	Board Meeting
Aug 27 - Sept 6	State Fair
Sept 6	Office Closed
Sept 14	Board Meeting
Sept 15	Conservation CRAZE
Oct 11	Office Closed
Oct 12	Land Judging Competition
Oct 12	Board Meeting
Nov 2	Election Day
Nov 9	Board Meeting

\*Check online calendar or newspaper notices for meeting times and place and changes.

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## Property owners:

**CRP sign up now through August 27th  
at your nearest FSA Office.**

Board of Directors: Joseph Anderjaska, Hayes Center; Kevin Fornoff, Hayes Center; Josh Friesen, Wallace; Buck Haag, Bartley; Ben Loomis, Maywood; Rick McConville, Indianola; Dan Nelsen, Moorefield; Brad Randel, Indianola; Marty Schurr, Maywood; Rick Spencer, Culbertson; and James Uerling, Indianola.

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, Neolle Turner; Red Willow County, Betty Fritsch

**NGPC offering information session on new  
rules for CRP sign up at 10:30 AM, August  
10th at the community building in Curtis.**

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Edited by Roger Lawson, Information and Education Coordinator, [rlawson@mrnrd.org](mailto:rlawson@mrnrd.org)

# SPRINKLES & SPLASHE S

## From Dan's Desk

The property tax that was collected as part of the LB 701 package to fund river flow enhancement projects has been a difficult process to follow. The Nebraska Supreme Court declared the tax unconstitutional and they provided no direction on what should be done with those funds. The board directed the district to try to refund those taxes to the individuals who paid them. In some cases that was unknown and impossible in others. A motion for a declaratory judgment

on how to refund these taxes in Red Willow District Court was denied and once again provided the board with no guidance.

These funds have been held in escrow and the board has directed that the taxes should be used to offset the District's levy for this year. We will NOT a levy property tax this year because of carryover funds from uncompleted projects and the funds held in escrow. Using this method, we will be able to return the funds collected to the parcels that paid the taxes in 2008. The return will probably not be an exact dollar return but it will be as close as possible.

The district has received numerous phone calls and other inquiries about the meter tampering situation in the Upper Republican NRD (URNRD) and if a similar situation existed in this District. Along with the URNRD, sites were investigated in this District and no discrepancies were found. All points of delivery were metered and they were metered at locations that did not allow for the bypass of water as in the URNRD. We are satisfied that the

**Continued on page two...**

## Curtis Offices See Staff Changes

Welcome aboard Spencer Campbell! Spencer began as the District's new technician on July 6th and is quickly making himself at home at his new desk. He grew up and still lives here in Curtis and plans on sticking around. He has a very short commute to work now since he lives very close to the District Office. Having grown up in Curtis, he already knows many of the landowners and the area which is a great asset to the District. Previously, he worked for the Ag Coop at the feed mill. He also worked briefly for the District in 2007 to assist with meter readings. The job suits him well since he enjoys being outdoors and meeting and visiting with the landowners in the District. He also enjoys hunting, fishing and golfing.

We say goodbye and good luck to Dennis Peterson who left the District in June to pursue better fishing and less snow in Texas. Dennis was with us for five years and in addition to checking and reading meters, chemigation inspections and tree plantings, he performed the necessary water quality testing at our observation wells. He is also a carpenter and

contributed his handiwork to the office during his tenure with the District. Good luck to you Dennis and may the bass always be biting.

Meanwhile, many of you may have learned by now that Marty Gugelman of the NRCS Curtis field Office transferred to an office in Kansas to rejoin his family. Marty was the civil engineer for the District and was responsible for designing terraces, diversions and small farm dams.

Doris Burke, the Curtis Field



Spencer Campbell of Curtis became the District's newest technician

**Continued on page two...**

## Inside This Issue

- ◆ From Dan's Desk
- ◆ NRCS & District Staff Changes
- ◆ Maywood Flood Control Structure Update
- ◆ College Scholarships Awarded
- ◆ NARD Corner
- ◆ Calendar of Events

## ...Continued from Dan's Desk

current arrangement is in compliance with our rules and we will continue to monitor the situation. We make every attempt to determine if violations occur and direct correction of any problems we find. We do have the authority to require compliance and we have used that authority on numerous occasions. Almost all the violations we have experienced have been minor in nature and are easily corrected. Decisions made by the board on violations are similar to action taken by a county court. A hearing process is available to the alleged violator and corrective actions can be suggested by that person and/or required by the district. We do have the authority to take away allocations or to decertify acres if the situation warrants that type of action. Monetary fines are not an option of the district and can only be imposed by the courts when a violator refuses to comply with district orders.

Repair of two flood control dams with design problems continues. Site 80a north of Maywood

showed problems following storms in 2007 and site 32a on the Hayes Hitchcock county line failed in 2008. Funding for repair was obtained last year and a contract was let over the past winter. BSB Construction of Curtis was awarded that contract and has started the repairs. The rainy spring and summer has slowed that progress but work is continuing. 80a should be complete sometime in August and work will go into full swing on 32a. Cracks developed in these dams as a result of differential settlement. Settlement of the soils was planned during the original construction but design problems allowed cracks to develop. A great deal of investigation has taken place during the repair to try to determine why this cracking happened. The district maintains 34 flood control structures and while there are different designs in many of them some had similar construction methods as the two structures that failed. This investigation will help decide what future repairs may be needed. ♦

## Conservation CrAzE Planned for September

5<sup>th</sup> grade students from schools within the Middle Republican District are invited to participate in the District's annual Conservation CrAzE on September 15th at Mill Park in Curtis. Conservation CrAzE is an outdoor conservation education program that provides hands-on activities guided by resource professionals.

Students will examine aquatic insects collected from Medicine Creek; become a wildlife species as they enact a predator-prey activity; learn firsthand how trees compete for resources; and witness soil erosion during a localized rain event among other activities.

Students will also learn about World Water Monitoring Day™, an in-

## Curtis Office Sees Staff Changes

...Continued from page 1.

office Secretary, is currently holding down the fort by herself. Since then, Jason Kennedy, the Resource Conservationist at the McCook Field Office was selected to become the District Conservationist though, he will remain in McCook visiting the Curtis Office on a weekly basis.

Confused yet? By the time this newsletter goes to press, by all likelihood, Marty's position will be filled here in Curtis and Doris will have company again. We look forward to meeting and working with the new Civil Engineer Technician.

Meanwhile, Doug Whisenhunt, the former DC, is in North Platte burning trees and pasture in SW Nebraska and across the State. Yep, the smoke you see on the horizon is probably Doug's handiwork. ♦

## Repair Work Continues on Maywood Flood Control Structure

“The contractor has made good progress on Upper Medicine 80A this week”, says Jim Hicks, project Engineer of the NRCS. The reconstruction of the flood control structure is being rebuilt in a stair step fashion with each stair step being a tier as the structure slopes upward to the top.

Hicks says that Tiers 11 through 14 were completed by last Thursday evening, July 22nd. Friday work will concentrate on bringing the earth-fill up to the elevation on tier 14. The structure will consist of 25 tiers.



A BSB worker tamps down moistened soil on Tier 14 on Flood Control Structure 80A north of Maywood.

“Each chimney tier is five feet wide and 2 feet deep and consists of 2 lifts, 1 foot thick. They are first flooded then compacted to take out any bulking. If you leave no footprints, the bulk is out”, explains Hicks. “Next week we should get more tiers done on 80A”, he added. Meanwhile,

the investigation of the crack in 32A (flood control structure near Blackwood creek on the Hayes Co.- Hitchcock Co. border) continues.

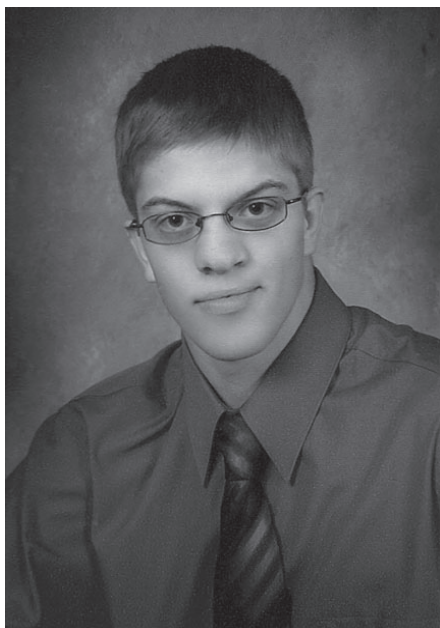
Updates are provided weekly to the District by Hicks ♣

## Deatrich and Wach Awarded College Scholarships

Two local students start college this fall with scholarship assistance from the Middle Republican Natural Resources District (MRNRD). The MRNRD Board of Directors selected the recipients for the 2010-11 College Scholarship offerings at the April monthly board meeting. Tell Deatrich of Curtis and Alex Wach of Wauneta each will receive a \$500 scholarship this August.

Deatrich is a 2010 graduate of Medicine Valley High School, Curtis. He is the son of Todd and Jan Deatrich. He will be starting his first year at Chadron State College this fall where he is majoring in range livestock management.

Wach graduated in May 2010 from Hayes Center High School. He plans on attending the University of Nebraska—Lincoln for its program in agricultural journalism. He is the son of Loran and Nancy Wach. ♣



College Scholarship winner Tell Deatrich of Curtis.



College Scholarship winner Alex Wach of Wauneta.

## Conservatoin CrAzE in September

...Continued from page 2.

ternational education and outreach program that builds public awareness and involvement in protecting water resources around the world by engaging citizens to conduct basic monitoring of their local water bodies. Each participating class will receive a World Water Monitoring Day™ kit for use at the nearest waterway to their school.

The Conservation CrAzE program is part of the District's youth education program including Stewardship Education, Arbor Day Celebration, Envirothon, Land Judging and Range Judging. These programs are designed to enrich students knowledge and experience in natural resources. ♣

## The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts Corner

### Occupation Tax Protects Nebraska's Economy

Contributed by Dean Edson, the Executive Director of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts.

Nebraska Natural Resources Districts worked together with the Senator Chris Langemeier and the Legislature's Natural Resources Committee during the 101st Legislative session to protect the future of Nebraska's natural resources. A bill introduced by Senator Mark Christensen allows NRDs in fully and over-appropriated areas to use the occupation tax to prevent economic hardship in the time of drought. LB 862 provides a local water user-based fee system to self-fund many of the activities necessary to adequately deal with the water challenges facing Nebraska while protecting local economies and all existing and future uses. The bill gives NRDs a fourth option to DNR's previously proposed three options in the Republican River Basin which did not take into account the adverse impact of severe water restrictions on local economies. In the Republican Basin, the bill provides for another option in addition to those proposed by DNR which have an adverse economic impact.

The bill allows the qualified NRDs to use an occupation tax to fund water programs. In order for NRDs to use the occupation tax they must have it in their Integrated Management Plan (IMP) and direct how the funds will be used. The IMP then must be approved by DNR. The occupation tax can only be used to purchase or lease groundwater or surface water rights, purchase or lease water from canals or reservoirs, removal of vegetation or invasive species that affect the river flow, or provide augmentation of the river flows. LB 862 will allow NRDs to implement programs that will help protect the economy in the Republican River Basin in water-short years. State sources of funds are not available to provide adequate protection to the local economy. ♣