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## Middle Republican Natural Resources District

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For Immediate Release

### Teresa Hayes Receives NRD Scholarship for Forestry Shortcourse

**Curtis** – The Middle Republican Natural Resources District (MRNRD) awarded Teresa Hayes, of Imperial, the 2005 MRNRD Educator Scholarship, worth \$150, to attend the Nebraska Forestry Shortcourse held at Chadron State College, June 20-24. The Nebraska Forestry



Shortcourse is a week-long, interactive, field-oriented, education course with lectures and hands-on experiences, review sessions and exams that are designed to increase forestry knowledge. The curriculum focuses on the principles of forestry protection and management in Nebraska.

Hayes, a 7-12 science teacher at Wauneta-Palisade Public Schools, appreciated the opportunity to learn from instructors who are seasoned experts in numerous fields of forestry and plans to implement forestry information in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Earth Science curriculum when discussing renewable and non-renewable resources. She will also use it in her Environmental Sciences class when discussing biomes of the world, planning for students to create a tree specimen collection while learning to use some of the tools that help foresters manage a forest for timber production.

A recent Environmental Literacy Survey published by the Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education (NACEE) indicated that 98% of respondents think environmental education should be taught in schools. Hayes has been an active participant in making that happen. For five years now, she has worked with other 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade science teachers in developing assessment questions based on the Nebraska Science Standards, which address energy resources along with renewable and non-renewable resources.

Hayes says, “Jr. High and High School students need to understand that natural resources are not only a part of our nation's legacy but are also important economic resources. Students need to understand the pros and cons associated with the preservation and



development of natural resources. For example, forests – and the forest industry – are just one of many of our country's resources. In this part of the state, water is often mentioned in the news along with green energy like ethanol production. Whether a discussion is held in a social studies or a science classroom, natural resources have played and will continue to play an important role in our nation's heritage. ”

When asked what students in the Republican River Basin need to understand most about natural resources, Hayes answered, “Our students need to understand that whether a particular natural resource is protected, conserved or fully developed, it still needs to have a best management practice. Students need to understand that whenever a resource is conserved or protected, a management plan can be controversial and a management scheme will have an effect on the economy, too. Whatever affects an economy ultimately affects its citizens. They need to understand that there are opposing points of view and somewhere in the middle, hopefully, lies an acceptable compromise.”

The Middle Republican NRD awards scholarships to educators who teach at schools that are located within the District or that serve a majority of students who reside in the District. Scholarships are available to educators attending continuing education workshops relating to natural resources conservation or agriculture. Two scholarships are available each year. This is the first year since 2002 that an Educator Scholarship has been given. “We simply haven’t gotten any applications,” says Kara Gall, Information and Education Coordinator for the District. “I’m surprised that we don’t have more teachers applying. We’ve got a really strong pool of ag and science teachers in this area who have received statewide and national recognition in FFA. I want them to know this resource exists.” Gall went on to say that although Hayes was the only applicant this year, by no means was the District any less critical when reviewing Hayes’ application. “Teresa has a proven track record in natural resources education. For two years running, her students have placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at the State Envirothon. Many of her students received honors at regional and state FFA competitions. She has an energy and enthusiasm for the environmental sciences that is contagious and inspiring.”

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Photos courtesy of Christine M. Meyer

PHOTO CAPTION (can be used for either photo): Participants at the Forestry Shortcourse worked in groups to get various tree measurements, height, diameter, number of logs, etc. Once done, they determined the forest site index and drew other conclusions to note whether or not the site was overstocked (it was) with trees. NRD Educator Scholarship Recipient Teresa Hayes is on the left.

**For more information:** Kara Gall  
Information and Education Coordinator