

SANDHILLS RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT



2010 SPRING NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 3

"Making the Sandhills a Better Life"

Serving Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Keith and Lincoln Counties.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

BIRD DIVERSITY TOUR PLANNED	2
NEW ADVENTURE CAMP ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT	2
RANGY YOUTH CAMP TO BE HELD IN JUNE	3
PRESIDENT PROPOSED CUTTING RC&D FUNDING	3
UPCOMING EVENTS	4

SANDHILLS RC&D COUNCIL BEGINS DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW FIVE YEAR AREA PLAN—2011-2015

Planning and implementation are the central functions of an RC&D area. Strategic planning can improve the organization's ability to capitalize on changing conditions, improve overall productivity, and make better decisions that result in the implementation of a more efficient and effective program. A well developed area plan provides a basis and direction for the Council to serve the area to the best of its ability.

The Sandhills RC&D recently began development of the next five year Area Plan – 2011-2016. This new five

year Area Plan will be based on the needs and goals of the eight counties within the Sandhills RC&D Council area— Grant, Thomas, Hooker, Arthur, McPherson, Blaine, Lincoln and Keith. The plan is open ended and dynamic, and outlines the tasks the council plans to accomplish. It identifies needs and opportunities, as well as broad and specific objectives to reach each goal. The plan is reviewed periodically as needed and revised to reflect the changing needs of the area over time.

A survey has been developed to assist in gathering

public input for the Area Plan from the residents in this eight county Sandhills RC&D area. Responses to the survey will be used to develop the goals and priorities included in the plan. Residents are encouraged to visit the Sandhills RC&D website at www.sandhillsrcd.org to access and complete the short survey. Input from across the area is fundamental to development of a comprehensive and dynamic Area Plan so please take the time to complete the survey today!

ATTENTION HOMEOWNERS



Rehabilitation funds for home improvements are now available through the Sandhills RC&D for **homeowners located in Arthur, Grant, Hooker, Logan, McPherson and Thomas Counties.** Eligible expenses include repair or replacement of windows, doors and siding; roof repair or replacement; water heater, furnace / AC; insulation and storm windows; repair of walls, ceilings and

floors; accessibility changes for persons with disabilities; and other health and safety related items. Program does have income eligibility requirements.

Other eligibility requirements are that the home must be owner-occupied, property taxes must be current, and a homeowner's insurance policy must be in force for the home in question. Mobile homes are not eligible for the program. Funds are provided as a low-interest or deferred loan. For a Program Application or if you have questions, please contact

Leigh or Chris at Community Development Services, 402/582-3580 or email at alex@plvwtelco.net. Applications are also available from the Village / County Clerk offices and the Sandhills RC&D offices @ 308/546-0636. Applicants will be approved on a first-come, first-ready basis.

These home improvement funds are provided to the Sandhills RC&D through a grant award from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

Our Mission

..to create an environment where all the citizens of the region work together to revitalize the rural economy, enhance and protect the natural resources, improve community infrastructure, and improve and increase tourism opportunities.

NEBRASKA SANDHILLS GRAZING SYSTEMS AND GRASSLAND BIRD DIVERSITY TOUR JUNE 2-3

The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition invites you to view abundant bird populations and learn how rangeland management plays an important role in the state's agricultural industry as well as provides an exceptional environment for Nebraska's bird habitat during the Nebraska Sandhills Grazing Systems and Grassland Bird Diversity Tour near Burwell, NE June 2-3.

The two day tour will begin at the Switzer Ranch-Callamus Outfitters where guests will check in and learn about the Switzer Ranch rangeland management view and history. Afternoon sessions cover topics of plant identification, classroom and field-based bird identification, and information regarding habitat needs of various species and how grazing and burning practices influence the quality of grassland bird habitat. That evening after a

buffet dinner, Bob Budd, with the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust will speak on the importance of wildlife on your ranch.

The second day will start out early with bird watching and recording species with the Nebraska Audubon. Mid-morning guests will travel by bus to a radio-telemetry site where Walter Schacht and Larkin Powell with the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture at UNL will present information on a study being done on prairie chicken nesting.

To finish the tour, guests will travel to the ranch of Bob and Aaron Price for a picnic lunch and presentation on the Price Ranch holistic management and its positive impact on grassland birds.

Cost of the tour is \$45 per person, and includes din-



ner, breakfast, and lunch and transportation to all sites. Space is limited to 50 attendees. Registration is due May 17 and participants can register at www.nebraskagrazinglands.org.

NEW ADVENTURE CAMP ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT BEING OFFERED JUNE 2010

Today concern and interest in the environment is booming, whether it is about understanding the needs of wildlife or how to take care of local water and land. Students who have completed sixth, seventh, or eighth grade can attend Adventure Camp About the Environment, which promises both fun and adventure while learning about the environment around them. Sponsored by Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts, the camp will focus on water resources, soil and land, forestry, range and grassland, wildlife and aquatics.

During the camp, students will have a chance to roll up

their sleeves and dig into nature, form a new understanding of the environment through interactive participation. In addition, the students will have a chance to enjoy the environment through activities such as canoeing, climbing, the water slide and other adventures. Students will also learn about possible careers in the area of natural resources from the professionals who work there every day.

It all takes place at the State 4-H Youth Camp at Halsey June 20th-23rd. Camp cost is \$175.00 and registrations are due May 1, 2010.

For more information, registration forms, and scholarship availability please contact your local Natural Resources District office.

Partnering with Nebraska's NRDs to provide training are the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, University of Nebraska Extension Services, Nebraska Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nebraska National Forest, Nebraska State 4-H Camp, University of Nebraska Conservation & Survey, and Nebraska Pheasants Forever. Nebraska NRDs... dedicated to Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future.

SANDHILLS RC&D OFFICERS

Willis Roethemeyer
President

Berva Arensdorf
1st Vice Chair

Tom Witt

2nd Vice Chair

Tammy White
Secretary

Mitch Glidden
Treasurer

RC&D STAFF

Twila Phillips
Executive Secretary

NRCS STAFF

Bob Broweleit
RC&D Coordinator

Society for Range Management - Nebraska Section

Range Youth Camp



The 46th Annual Range Youth Camp will be held June 7-11, 2010 at the State 4-H Camp in Halsey. All youth at least 14 but not over 18 by Oct. 1 can attend camp. Campers usually have a wide variety of experience with range management and everyone has a great time and makes a lot of new friends.

Range camp provides hands-on experience with rangeland resources. Campers learn to identify range plants and range sites, judge range condition, and determine stocking rates. Other topics include livestock health and handling, range improvements, geology, and wildlife.

The camp features field and classroom activities designed to provide range management education. Field activities include a forest tour, a ranch visit

and many "hands on" exercises which will introduce and develop skills important for range management and range judging contests.

Crew competitions are held for a variety of activities including water relays, canoe races, scavenger hunts, range judging, and plant identification. During the tour of a local ranch, campers participate in a range judging contest and a "ranch rodeo". A steak fry and dance top off the week.

Awards are given to the top crew, top returning camper, top first-year camper and runner-up. The top 10 campers are also recognized. Awards include a plaque, belt



2009 Range Camp attendees

buckles, and plant identification books. The top 10 campers are eligible to compete for a trip to the international SRM meetings held each year in January or February.

For registration forms or for more information visit:
www.nesrm.org.

PRESIDENT CUTS 2011 RC&D FUNDING IN BUDGET PROPOSAL

President Barrack Obama eliminated funding for the RC&D Program in his Fiscal Year 2011 budget proposal. To restore funding to the program, assistance is needed from community and council members alike.

The RC&D Program is one of the federal government's success stories, creating jobs and leveraging financial resources efficiently to support economic development and resource protection in rural areas. On average, \$5.60 is generated for every \$1 of federal funds invested in the RC&D Program; for some RC&D Councils the leverage is even greater.

In FY 2009, the 375 RC&D Councils of the RC&D

Program created or retained over 11,800 jobs through its initiatives. For an allocation of \$50.73 million, this is only \$430 of federal investment per job created. A dynamic job-creation engine like that should be extolled as a prime example of the effectiveness of federal funding, not targeted for elimination.

The President's budget justification states that the RC&D Program was established to "build community leadership skills...that would access Federal, State, and local funding sources for the community's benefit. After 47 years, this goal has been accomplished." Most

would agree that the need for leadership and support in our local communities is as great now as it ever was. The RC&D has always provided this leadership, and is prepared to continue its excellent mission.

You can help restore funding to the RC&D program by contacting your members of congress and asking that level funding be restored to the budget for RC&D support. Congressional contact information can be found on the Sandhills RC&D website at www.sandhillsrcd.org.

BOARD MEMBERS

Eric Hansen
Dr. Steve Boyer
Dan Deibler
Cliff Welsh
Merlin Ring
Toni Ring
Stan Pettit
Rex Lanka
Carl Rundback
Lonnie Peters
Virginia Sizer

We're on the web!

www.sandhillsrccd.org

SANDHILLS RC&D

Resource Conservation & Development

P.O. Box 28
102 SE 2nd Street
Mullen, NE 69152

Phone: 308-546-0636

Fax: 308-545-0637

E-mail: info@sandhillsrccd.org



“ M A K I N G T H E S A N D H I L L S A B E T T E R L I F E ”

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 18—4-7p.m.—Dismal River Club Job Fair—Sandhills RC&D meeting room

March 19—Aronia Berry Meeting—10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.—Cedar Hills Vineyard & Gardens—Ravenna

March 20—8-12 a.m.—Dismal River Club Job Fair—Sandhills RC&D meeting room

March 30—Monthly Sandhills RC&D Council meeting—via Teleconference

April 1—30—Dismal River Club golf package auction on eBay—Fundraiser for Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway

April 14—Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway Monthly meeting

April 19—10:00 a.m.—Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition meeting—Sandhills RC&D meeting room

April 20—RC&D Coordinator/PSA meeting in Grand Island

April 27—Monthly Sandhills RC&D Council meeting

May 20—Watchable Wildlife Workshop—Ogallala

June 2—3—Nebraska Sandhills Grazing Systems & Grassland Bird Diversity Tour—Switzer Ranch-Burwell

June 7-11—Range Youth Camp—NE State 4-H Camp-Halsey

June 20-23—Adventure Camp About the Environment
NE State 4-H Camp—Halsey

Sandhills Resource Conservation and Development Council receives technical assistance from the United States department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

An equal opportunity employer and provider.