

The Pipelining

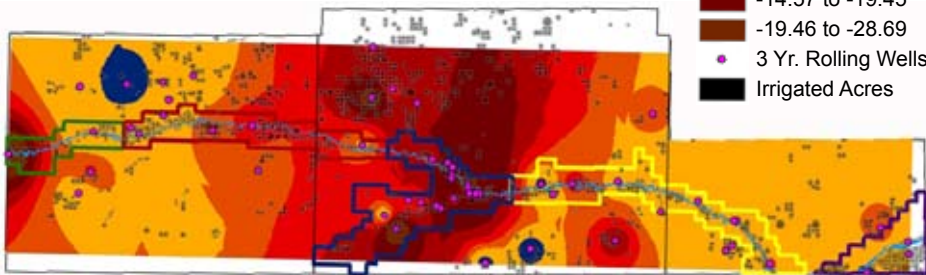
Winter 2010
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SOUTH PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT Newsletter

SPNRD 3 Year Rolling Averages Fall 2009

Average difference between 1988-1997 ground water level averages and 2007-2009 ground water level averages in feet = 3 yr. rolling average.

Mapping Note: The map shows areas within our district where there are no monitoring wells present. The further the distance between two points, the interpolated surface will average out this bias rather than preserve it. White areas shown in the District's counties do not contain monitoring wells used in the averages. To more accurately track overall levels and trends, the District is working to add wells within designated areas.



Subarea	# of Wells	3 Yr. Rolling Avg.	Allocation
Pine Bluffs to Oliver	2	-14.12 feet	14"/yr., 48" over 3 yrs.
Oliver to Buffalo Bend	6	-4.77 feet	16"/yr., 54" over 3 yrs.
Buffalo Bend to Sidney	18	-15.72 feet	14"/yr., 48" over 3 yrs.
Sidney to Colo. Line	8	-2.79 feet	16"/yr., 54" over 3 yrs.
South Platte Valley	4	-2.89 feet	20"/yr., 80" over 4 yrs.
Fully Appropriated Area	19	-4.71 feet	20"/yr., 80" over 4 yrs.

District Reports Fall Ground Water Levels

The District's 2009 Fall Ground Water Report shows short term fall ground water levels are recovering, while in the long term, levels remain low.

Each year, SPNRD technicians take ground water level measurements in the spring, prior to the beginning of the high water use season, and again in the fall when the majority of high water uses are past. The SPNRD board of directors use comparisons over time to determine the effectiveness of water management programs and make management decisions.

Within the District's three counties, all three showed average inclines, or rises, in water levels in comparison to those from 2008. Kimball County wells averaged the smallest inclines, rising 0.22 feet from last year. Deuel County's

average incline was 1.27 feet, while Cheyenne County wells averaged 1.64 feet higher.

This fall 148 wells across the District were measured for the fall comparisons. Thirty-two of those were in Kimball County, with water levels ranging from a 5.18-foot incline to a 5.63-foot decline. The lowest water levels were measured in far western portions of the county. Of the 32 wells, 15, or 46.88 percent, showed water level declines from last year.

In Cheyenne County, 93 wells were measured and 23, or 24.73 percent, declined. County levels ranged from wells that inclined 11.18 feet to a 4.59-foot drop.

Four of Deuel County's 23 wells

See **WATER LEVELS** page 5

SPNRD Board Assigns Leadership

At their first meeting each year, the South Platte Natural Resources District board of directors chooses its leadership and representatives to boards and committees for the upcoming year.

South Platte NRD board members are elected in seven subdistricts in Kimball, Cheyenne and Deuel counties in the southern Panhandle. In representing the District, members represent their constituents on both local and state boards and committees.



Keith Rexroth

By unanimous vote of the members present at the January 12, 2010 board meeting, Keith Rexroth of Sidney was re-elected as board chairman. Rexroth has served on the board since January 1993. He is also a representative on the state's Natural Resources Commission, which deals with the management of state funding programs administered by the Department of Natural Resources.

Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel was chosen as the board's vice-chair. In addition to the family farm near Gurley, Burkhart-Kriesel



**Cheryl
Burkhart-Kriesel**

See **BOARD ASSIGNMENTS** page 2



Tom Biggs



Bill Halligan



Larry Rutt



Jim Johnson



Paul Hutchison

Board Assignments *Matching Representation and Interests*

Continued from Page 1

serves as a University of Nebraska Community & Economic Development Specialist at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff. She has been on the board of directors since April 1996.

Sidney area farmer Tom Biggs, who has been a board member since July 1999, was chosen as board secretary.

Board members again appointed Rod Horn, the District's general manager, as treasurer.

Two main committees review and make recommendations to the board on

matters concerning the district.

The District Operations Committee is charged with budget, planning, legislative issues, operations and personnel issues. Bill Halligan of Bushnell was chosen to chair the committee and will serve with members Jim Johnson of Dix, and Rexroth.

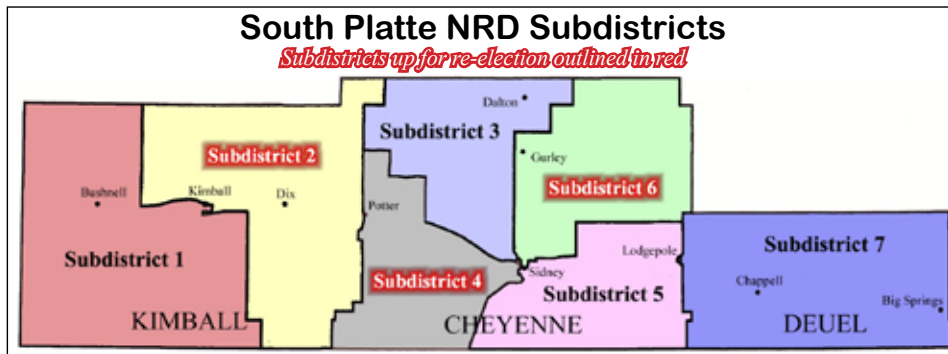
Board members serving on the Natural Resources Projects & Programs Committee make recommendations on the programs managing land and water resources. Members include Chair Paul Hutchison of Sidney, Larry Rutt from

Chappell, Biggs and Burkhart-Kriesel.

Johnson is the board representative on the Nebraska Association of Resources District (NARD) board of directors, and Rutt is the alternate.

Burkhart-Kriesel represents the board as delegate to the Panhandle RC&D, with Rexroth serving as alternate.

Johnson is the board representative on the Citizens' Monitoring Committee for Kimball Clean Harbors Environmental Services, Inc.



Three NRD Seats Up For Re-election in 2010

Three seats are up for re-election this year on the South Platte NRD board of directors.

The terms of James C. Johnson of Dix, Subdistrict 2; Paul Hutchison of Sidney, Subdistrict 4; and Tom Biggs of Sidney, Subdistrict 6 expire on December 31.

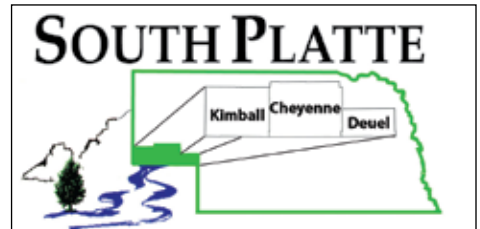
The NRD directors are elected by subdistricts in Cheyenne, Kimball and Deuel counties. Subdistrict 2 comprises the northeastern half of Kimball County including northeastern Kimball, and part of western Cheyenne County, including western portions of Potter. Subdistrict 4 is in southwestern Cheyenne County, and includes the east side of Potter and

southwestern area of Sidney. Subdistrict 6 is in northeastern Cheyenne County, including the northeastern area of Sidney and the town of Gurley.

The NRD board consists of seven directors who meet on the second Tuesday of each month. The directors serve four-year terms, with half of the board seats up for election every two years. Each has one vote on matters before the board.

The deadline for incumbents to file for re-election is February 15. The deadline for non-incumbents is March 1.

A person currently holding any elected office, not just for the NRD, is considered an incumbent for purposes of filing.



SOUTH PLATTE
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

Board of Directors

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Keith Rexroth | Chair |
| Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel | Vice-Chair |
| Tom Biggs | Secretary |
| James C. Johnson | |
| Bill Halligan | |
| Paul A. Hutchison | |
| Larry L. Rutt | |

Staff

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rod L. Horn | General Manager |
| Galen Wittrock | Assistant Manager |
| Linda Suhr | Administrative Manager |
| Jodi Livingstone | District Secretary |
| Kyle Liebig | Water Resources Coordinator |
| Travis Glanz | Water Resources Technician |
| Ryan Reisdorff | Water Resources Programs Specialist |
| Chris Kaiser | Natural Resources Coordinator |
| Don Ogle | Information & Ed. Coordinator |
| Jane Joyce | NRCS/NRD Field Office Secretary |
| Hilary Cook | NRCS/NRD Secretary/Technician |
| Thad Kuntz | Ground Water Modeler/Hydrogeologist |

The Pipeline is published quarterly by the South Platte Natural Resources District, 551 Parkland Dr. P.O. Box 294, Sidney, NE 69162 (308) 254-2377

Edited by Don Ogle
Information & Education Coordinator.
For the latest NRD news and program updates, visit our Website at www.spnrd.org

District Explores Budget Options Following Funding Cuts

South Platte NRD management and the board of directors are currently working on options to fulfill budget obligations following changes in expected state revenues.

The NRD uses various grants and funds from state sources to fund parts of a number of projects and programs, allowing it to keep the local tax levy low.

This year, however, when the state experienced a shortfall, the Nebraska Legislature made more than \$334 million in budget cuts to balance the state's budget. Some of those cuts were to dedicated, but unspent funds in programs such as the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP), the Interrelated Water Management Plan

Program, and others that the South Platte and other NRDs depend on to leverage funds for conservation projects and programs.

As an example, three of the cuts will affect the South Platte NRD's budget. Of that, \$73,509 is in two projects and programs run through SPNRD, while a portion of a third, for \$88,858, is a joint venture with the North Platte NRD in Scottsbluff.

One of the results for SPNRD is negotiating payment of a contract for an extensive GIS (Geographic Information System) project being developed to help both producers and the NRD track water use within the District.

"The contractor was understanding

and has allowed us to extend the payment schedule into our next budget year," Rod Horn, SPNRD general manager said when outlining the situation to the board of directors recently.

While such moves allow the District to remain within budget this year, possible affects on next year's budget remain unknown.

As the new Legislative session begins, lawmakers continue to talk about lower revenues and more spending cuts and stretching government services to maintain the balance.

One of the concerns Horn and the directors share is the effect state moves could have on maintaining the quality

See **BUDGET** page 6

PF Workshop Provides Information On Controlled Burning

Nebraska Pheasants Forever habitat specialists will join those from the NRD and NRCS to provide information for landowners who want to learn more about controlled burning as a land management tool.

The workshop will be held Tuesday, February 16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sidney Holiday Inn and Conference Center.

According to Pheasants Forever, controlled burning in early spring accomplishes two main objectives in habitat management. First, burning limits the growth of woody and other unwanted vegetation, maintaining the prairie as a distinct ecosystem. Second, prescribed burning consumes dead material that accumulates in grasslands, releasing the nutrients bound in the plant litter stimulating vigorous new growth of grasses, forbs, and legumes. This new growth also promotes insect production, which is a critical food source for young birds.

Depending on the project's objective, prescribed burns can also be effective in the late summer, fall and even in the winter. Additionally, prescribed burning can be a tool in the mid-contract management of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands.

Andy Moore is a wildlife biologist for Pheasants Forever and serves that organization, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist through the Scottsbluff NRCS office. He says the workshop will cover the aspects of planning and carrying out a successful controlled burn.

Safety is the major underlying theme in the majority of the sessions, whether it's using proper personal protective equipment, choosing the right weather conditions, using good ignition techniques or other facets.

"Forming a good burn plan and following it is one of the keys to a safe and success-



Controlled burns such as the one performed here, are a valuable option to landowners managing their land. Pheasants Forever will provide information on when and how to burn, as well as how to do it safely.

ful burn," says Moore. Burn Planning will be one of the topics covered.

Moore says in addition to the training, those attending will become familiar with one of Nebraska Pheasants Forever Mobile Prescribed Burn Units (MPBUs). Each unit contains all the equipment necessary to conduct a safe and effective prescribed burn. All the equipment is

housed in an enclosed trailer that can be hooked to a vehicle and driven to a burn location.

There will be a \$10 registration fee for the workshop, which includes lunch. For more information, contact Moore at the NRCS office in Scottsbluff, 308-632-2195, or on his cell phone, 308-631-7163.

NRD To Hold Workshop Providing Landscape Care Information

The District is hosting a workshop to assist homeowners who want to better understand how their landscapes work and steps they can take to manage care for the best results and environmental protection.

The workshop will be held Saturday, March 13 in the South Platte NRD board room in Sidney, featuring top Panhandle specialists in a number of disciplines. Registration is at 8 a.m. and sessions will run from 8:15 to 12:30. Registration is free.

Wellhead Protection Areas (WPAs) are designated parcels of land surrounding ground water wells that provide water to the District's towns and villages. The workshop is geared toward homeowners within those areas, but is useful for anyone wanting to learn more about landscape management.

The workshop is part of the NRD's efforts to provide the best management information within WPAs. Using funding from a Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Section 319 grant, which focuses on ground water quality,

the NRD is able to host the event.

Soil scientist Angie Elg from the Natural Resources Conservation Service will explain how soil works to carry nutrients to trees, grasses and other plants



What does it take to manage a lawn, garden or landscape in the best way possible? The NRD is hosting a workshop that will help any homeowner with the answers.

in a landscape. How a homeowner manages those nutrients can assure optimum plant health, less leaching of nutrients, and best use of dollars spent on property care.

C. Dean Yonts, irrigation engineer at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center provides information on water's

part in property care, from the best times to water to how much and how often it's needed.

In most home landscapes, grass is the largest and most intensively managed part. One of UNL Extension Educator Jim Schild's specialties is taking care of grasses, and he will share care tips on both cool and warm season grass in the landscape.

The health of the trees and shrubs protecting your home are an integral part of the landscape and Galen Wittrock, tree specialist from the NRD, has information on properly caring for them. With adequate care, trees can resist pests and disease, lowering the need for chemical intervention.

When nutrients and chemical are needed, Gary Stone, a UNL Extension Educator, will be sharing his experience with handling both. Stone knows not only the best times and methods for figuring applications, but also how much to use when needed.

Walk-ins are welcome, but the NRD asks that if possible, participants pre-register by contacting the office.

Community Forestry Adds To Urban Beauty, Protection

For urban enhancement, the District's Community Forestry Program, like its country counterpart, is designed to improve overall tree populations at a lower cost to property owners. The program, open to urban neighborhood groups, businesses, cities and villages, provides up to a 50 percent cost share to help pay for the cost of purchasing, planting, maintaining and removing trees. Property owners purchase trees together through a cooperative effort, increasing purchasing power and lowering their overall costs.

One of the unique and beneficial parts of the program is the variety of ways that participants can pay for their share. Applicants can use private funding, community grants and budgets, or even donated in-kind labor. Using donations and labor, applicants could possibly accomplish tree planting projects with no out-of-pocket expenses.



Conservation Trees have added to the beauty of our countryside, provided shelter for homes and livestock, and increased the region's wildlife habitat. Sign up for this year's program is now underway.

Conservation Tree Program Offers Many Options

For those interested in enhancing or protecting their rural property through tree planting, a number of cost assistance programs are available through the NRD, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission depending on the landowner's goal.

The Conservation Tree Program offers a number of options for protect-

ing farmsteads, fields and providing wildlife habitat. Since the Conservation Tree Program began, about three million trees have been purchased through it. In addition, NRD-approved contractors have added many more.

Through the program, the District provides containerized and bare-root tree seedlings for establishing farmstead

See CONSERVATION TREES page 7

See COMMUNITY FORESTRY page 6

Ground Water Quality Monitoring Report Released

Eighteen years of monitoring nitrates within South Platte NRD water tables have been completed, and some of the average readings appear to show positive results of intensive nutrient management in some ground water management areas.

The primary goal of the South Platte NRD's groundwater quality management subareas is to improve groundwater quality to within federal EPA and Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality standards. The standard for nitrate nitrogen, or Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL), is 10 parts per million (ppm). Depending on the results of groundwater nitrate testing in a given area, a phased approach is used to bring the contaminants under control. The District uses a network

of NRD and privately owned wells to monitor nitrate levels, taking samples from most at least once every year. This year, 117 of the 159 network wells were sampled. According to SPNRD Natu-

Ground Water Management Area Averages Shown In Parts Per Million (ppm)

Area	2009	High (Year)
Kimball Co. Lodgepole Valley	4.88	5.60 (2002)
Sidney	7.53	9.42 (2002)
East Lodgepole Valley	6.73	7.33 (2003)
Lodgepole Valley	6.54	6.76 (2007)
South Platte Valley	9.50	11.12 (2002)

ral Resources Coordinator Chris Kaiser, who runs the monitoring program, the District could not sample some wells. Kaiser explains some wells were enrolled in temporary deferment or EQIP Special Initiative and as a result were not in use. Others

were not used often or not at all depending on crop choice and timing of rains, so staff was unable to monitor them. Two of the most intensively managed areas, the Sidney Ground Water Management

Area, and the South Platte Valley Ground Water Management Area, both show milestone lows in their averages. Within the Sidney Ground Water Management Area, the averages from two groups of wells dropped below 10 ppm

for the first time in many years. That resulted in the area average dropping below 8 ppm. Sidney municipal wells averaged 9.78 ppm, down from a high of 11.68 in 2001. Sidney Draw monitoring wells, which averaged 12.35 ppm in 2000, have dropped to 7.77 ppm in the 2009 report.

In the South Platte Valley Subarea composite average, the report shows an average reading of 9.50 ppm. That is down from a high of 11.20 ppm in 2000.

To view the complete SPNRD Ground Water Quality Monitoring Program Report, they are available through the SPNRD office at 551 Parkland Dr. in Sidney, or can be seen on the District Website, www.spnrd.org.

Water Levels *Long Range Figures Remain In Steep Declines*

Continued from Page 1

(17.39 percent) had declining levels. Deuel County one-year ground water levels ranged from a high 7.05-foot incline in the valley to a decline of 4.53 feet on the north table.

In comparing fall levels to those 20 years ago, 75 percent of wells show declines. Sixty-five wells were used for measurements at that time and today range from a 13.64-foot incline to a decline of 37.91 feet. In the 20-year measurements, the greatest numbers of declines, 88.24 percent, are in Kimball County. Cheyenne County has 78.37 percent of its wells showing declines. Just over half of Deuel County wells are lower in the 20-year figures.

On average, Cheyenne County wells are 9.11 feet lower than 20 years ago. Kimball County averages are 5.04 feet lower, while Deuel County's average is 0.75 feet higher.

For the first time, the fall report shows 30-year well figures from 62 wells. Of those, 61.29 percent show declines. All

three counties show average declines, but water level comparisons show ranges from a 25.51-foot incline to a decline of 34.92 feet. Both extremes are in Kimball County.

Another direct comparison uses averages from the past three years in the District's six subareas and checks those numbers against a 10-year span covering a variety of rainfall conditions affecting water use and levels.

In those comparisons two subareas, from Pine Bluffs, WY to Oliver Reservoir and Buffalo Bend to Sidney, show double-digit depletions from the historic levels. From Buffalo Bend to Sidney the rolling average shows water levels are 15.72 feet lower, while Pine Bluffs to Oliver lags 14.12 feet behind.

All six subareas show depletions, but the others are not as drastic. Comparisons by subarea are:

Oliver to Buffalo Bend, -4.77 feet; Sidney to Colorado, -2.79 feet; South Platte Valley, -2.89 feet; and the Fully

Appropriated area, -4.71 feet.

As shown in the report, the SPNRD uses a larger number of wells to measure ground water levels than in the past, but mapping used for the report sometimes indicates data that doesn't show a fully accurate picture of the District's ground water levels.

To more accurately track overall levels and trends, the District is working to add wells within designated areas. SPNRD has submitted a grant application to the Nebraska Environmental Trust to drill 39 monitoring wells in crucial areas where there is no way to determine ground water level changes. If SPNRD can drill the wells, officials feel they can develop a more comprehensive network of ground water measuring wells.

The complete Fall 2009 Ground Water Level Report can be accessed on the District's Website, www.spnrd.org, or by contacting the South Platte Natural Resources District at 308-254-2377 or 551 Parkland Dr. in Sidney.

Wellness Program Activities Benefit Community, Employees

District employees participating in a wellness program formed last year are not only reaping benefits, but this past holiday season also extended their efforts to community wellness.

As part of the District Wellness Program, employees donated food items to the Salvation Army Food Pantry. Employee donations included a variety of canned vegetables and foods and dried milk.

The latest activity also reached its conclusion, when Kyle Liebig, the District's water resources coordinator, won a "race" across the District.

Through the program, participating employees and directors were issued pedometers to track the miles they walked



District Secretary Jodi Livingstone and Water Resources Coordinator prepare to take donations given through the District Wellness Program to the food pantry

through the days and weeks. In November, employees chose a walking challenge for an activity. Employees miles

were logged and totaled, with the first one to walk the 110 miles across the District winning a gift card. Kyle "crossed the District" in about two months.

In other activities, participants have been encouraged to increase the number of servings of fruit and vegetables, daily water intake, and begun to track reductions in their Body Mass Index (BMI).

The effort is part of one initiated by the Nebraska Association of Resources District, seeking to improve lifestyles and overall health of its membership.

By participating, SPNRD staff and board members are not only watching out for their own health, but also keeping personal and taxpayer costs down through lower healthcare costs.

District Provides Maintenance Assistance

Flow meters within the District are required to be properly maintained once every three years, but the SPNRD can help defray the costs of expensive repairs. In extreme cases, assistance for a new flow meter purchase is available through the replacement program.

Maintenance and repairs are based on a three year period, with no single flow meter receiving more than \$150.00 every three years for a combination of maintenance and/or repairs. The maintenance cost-share amount is \$30.00 and the repair cost-share is 50% of the cost, up to \$300.00.

The replacement portion of the program is aimed at producers who have had difficulty keeping flow meters op-

erational over the last several years. To qualify for flow meter replacement cost-share, the flow meter will have to meet certain requirements such as: the existing flow meter can no longer be covered under the manufacturer's warranty; has become inoperable twice in the previous three years and/or the repairs are equal to or greater than 50% of the cost of a new flow meter; and the replacement meter must be replaced with an SPNRD board-approved mechanical flow meter.

Replacement flow meter cost-share will be available for all meters meeting the requirements, with no one meter location receiving replacement cost-share more than once every ten years. The re-

See MAINTENANCE page 7

Budget *Maintaining The Balance*

Continued from Page 3

of the District's projects and programs, without having to unduly raise its property tax request.

"The Legislature did what it had to so it could maintain a balanced budget," says Horn. "What we want to try and avoid is to make up for that by raising our local taxes."

For the 2010 budget year, the SPNRD slightly lowered both its budget and tax levy. The FY2010 tax request was \$820,356.00, or 7.16 % lower than the previous year. The District's

\$2,530,153.00 overall budget is three percent lower than a year ago as well. Even so, the percentage of funding for projects and programs that directly benefit constituents rose to 59.2 percent for FY2010.

"We'll continue to manage the funds we have in the best way possible to maintain the quality of our programs and services that protect the lives and property of District residents, and protect the future of natural resources in our District."

Community Forestry

Continued from Page 4

Galen Wittrock, program coordinator, says the program is set up in a way that it encourages neighbors to cooperate in adding trees not just to their individual properties, but throughout their entire neighborhood. Wittrock said residents can form a neighborhood group that will share in the labor and expense while at the same time enhancing the neighborhood as a whole.

In the District's towns and villages, Wittrock said residents have in the past participated in cooperation with their town board, although they could still form an independent neighborhood group if they choose.

School groups within the SPNRD's three counties can also participate.

Qualifications are relatively simple. In addition to meeting their cost share requirement, applicants will agree to maintain the trees for 10 years, with 3-5 and 5-10 year guidelines. Applicants need to consult their local tree board or town authorities to make sure their plan meets local ordinances.

Applications for the Community Forestry Program will be taken through the end of February. Those wishing to receive assistance through either program are encouraged to apply as soon as possible, as competition for available funds is great.

Cash For Grass Program Helps Protect Resources

As part of its responsibility for protecting ground water from nonpoint-source pollution (leaching of chemicals) and over-use, the NRD uses a number of programs to encourage practices that can help reduce the amounts of chemical, nutrients and water used on various lands.

One of the most successful in urban areas has been the Cash For Grass Program. Since the program began in 2004, nearly 38,000 sq. ft. of buffalograss has been installed.

The 2010 growing season is rapidly approaching and the NRD asks residents to consider buffalograss as an option in their landscape plans.

This project implements ground water quality protection by helping urban property owners served by public water suppliers, and those within WPAs, in Cheyenne, Deuel and Kimball counties replace traditional cool grass lawns with buffalograss. In addition to cool grass lawn replacement, the program is open to property owners who are making initial landscape installations or refurbishing a property landscape. These



Buffalograss can provide an aesthetically pleasing lawn, while at the same time reducing the chances for water contamination by using less fertilizer and chemicals.

options are made available to encourage use of buffalograss over traditional cool season grasses.

Buffalograss advantages are numerous in ground water protection. In most cases .5 to 1 lbs of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. is appropriate for a low to medium maintenance turf, about one-third the amount required for a healthy cool grass lawn. In addition, maintaining buffalograss has a lower water requirement, approximately 50-75% less than cool season grasses, depending on condi-

tions. Less water application greatly reduces the chances of nitrogen leaching into ground water, lessens the chance for runoff into storm drains and has the added benefit of less water being drawn from the aquifer. Buffalograss also is less susceptible to many of the pests associated with traditional turf grass, potentially reducing the amount of pesticides used.

Properties selected for program enrollment must be located in communities served by public water suppliers, including Kimball, Sidney,

Chappell, Potter, Dix, Bushnell, Dalton, Gurley, Lodgepole, and Big Springs or within those towns' wellhead protection areas. Installations may be located in either the front yard or back yard, but no single converted area shall be less than 300 square feet.

Applicants must agree to a brief pre-inspection before their project begins. As a method of follow-up, a post-inspection will be conducted before rebates are issued, and participants must agree to not remove the new turf for at least five years, or as long as they own the property. Yard signs would identify the Cash For Grass project areas and be left in place for not less than two years to advertise the benefits of buffalograss.

Owners of approved project properties can receive up to \$150.00 reimbursement for their choice of either Cody or Bowie brand buffalograss seed, or Legacy® buffalograss plugs.

Application deadline is May 1, 2010. For more program information, contact coordinator Ryan Reisdorff at the office, or go to the District Website, www.spnrd.org.

Conservation Trees

windbreaks, shelter belts and wildlife habitat.

But the program isn't limited to tree purchases. It also provides for assistance in purchasing weed barrier fabric, drip watering systems, planting services and other steps necessary to successful projects. SPNRD and NRCS personnel can also draw up conservation planting plans.

Landowners wanting to plant trees on their property have several options to choose from. They can have District approved contractors do the work of planting, or rent the District's tree

planter and plant their own.

Bare root trees and shrubs remain the least expensive of the District's offerings at 80 cents each. Small potted specimens are \$1.00 apiece, while regular potted trees are \$1.50 each. There is a 10-tree minimum for each species ordered.

To apply, or for more information, contact Galen Wittrock at the SPNRD. Order forms for the Conservation Tree Program are also available on the District Web site, www.spnrd.org.

Tree varieties are on the form.

Continued from Page 4



Proper maintenance is not only required, but can also help avoid catastrophic failures such as this.

Maintenance

Continued from Page 6

placement cost-share amounts will be based on a maximum amount of 50% of the county average of \$1,335.42, based on NRCS guidelines. Figures are reviewed annually and replacement cost-share amounts follow those guidelines.

To find out more about the program call Travis Glanz at 308-254-2377.

South Platte Natural Resources District
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NeRAIN Helps Collect Crucial Precipitation Data

The South Platte NRD is looking for volunteers to participate in the NeRain program throughout the District, particularly in Kimball County.

NeRAIN coordinates the efforts of volunteers who collect and report measurements of precipitation using high quality backyard rain gauges. Precipitation reported by the volunteers is transmitted via the Internet to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources each day. Climate analysts process the data and prepare maps showing rainfall patterns.

NeRAIN information is updated daily and available for public access on the web at <http://dnrdata.dnr.ne.gov/NeRAIN/>.

Thirteen participating Nebraska Natural Resources Districts, the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and other water-focused organizations analyze and document data gathered by volunteers. The data provides important daily decision-making information for agriculture, industry, home water use, utility providers, insurance companies, resource managers, and educators.

Gauges, purchased through a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, are provided to volunteers free of charge. The volunteers, preferably with internet access, are asked to report their precipitation.

About 30 volunteers are participating in Kimball, Cheyenne and Deuel counties, which make up the South Platte NRD. However, just a few of those are in Kimball County. NeRain Coordinator Chris Kaiser would particularly like to have more participants from the county to have higher quality information in that area.

Kaiser encourages residents throughout the district to apply to participate in the program. Because the goal is to have a volunteer in each township in the district, the NRD will select from the applications

based on geographic area. After the volunteers are selected, Kaiser provides a brief training session and provides the gauges.

For more information or to volunteer, call the South Platte NRD at (308) 254-2377.

