



Nebraska Resources

Newsletter

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Agency Numbers to Remember

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Editor's Note:

A full color electronic version of this newsletter can be found on the Department's web site along with back issues at <http://www.dnr.gov/dnrnews/newsarchive2.html>.

Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources administers six state funds used to help Nebraskans conserve, protect and enhance Nebraska's natural resources. The **Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund**, established in 1963, is a revolving state fund used to help local sponsors acquire land rights, easements or fee titles to tracts of land necessary in building flood abatement projects. The Fund has primarily been used by sponsors of P.L. 566 Watershed Projects, which are planned, designed, and principally funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. To be eligible for funding assistance, local sponsors such as natural resources districts, cities, or counties must enter into an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources specifying a hydrologic unit (drainage area) and the total number of necessary land rights involved. The fund can be used to acquire, by easement or fee title, only one of every four necessary land rights for the specific project. Historically local sponsors have utilized this Fund

to acquire the most expensive tracts needed. An additional requirement that a minimum of 75% of the land in the drainage area above the structure be adequately treated prior to reservoir construction helps ensure project longevity through sediment and erosion control. An appraisal prepared in accordance with state statutes must accompany each application for easement or fee title funds. After obtaining an easement, the eligible sponsor is reimbursed 50% of the appraised value. In the case of fee title acquisition, the sponsor normally receives 100% reimbursement or cost-share assistance. Within 120 days after acquiring title to a tract, the sponsor must prepare a detailed conservation plan in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service identifying needed conservation measures. In most cases the sponsor leases out portions of the tract suitable for agricultural production and the rental income is used to install needed conservation practices to that tract or is returned to the Fund for future uses.

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Timberpoint Recreation Area (North Oak Watershed Structure 6-C) is one example of 21 projects retained for public use.

This multi-use project in Butler County is an example of a P.L. 566 project that was designed and built by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and funded from both federal and state funds. Project benefits enjoyed by area residence include outdoor recreation, flood abatement,

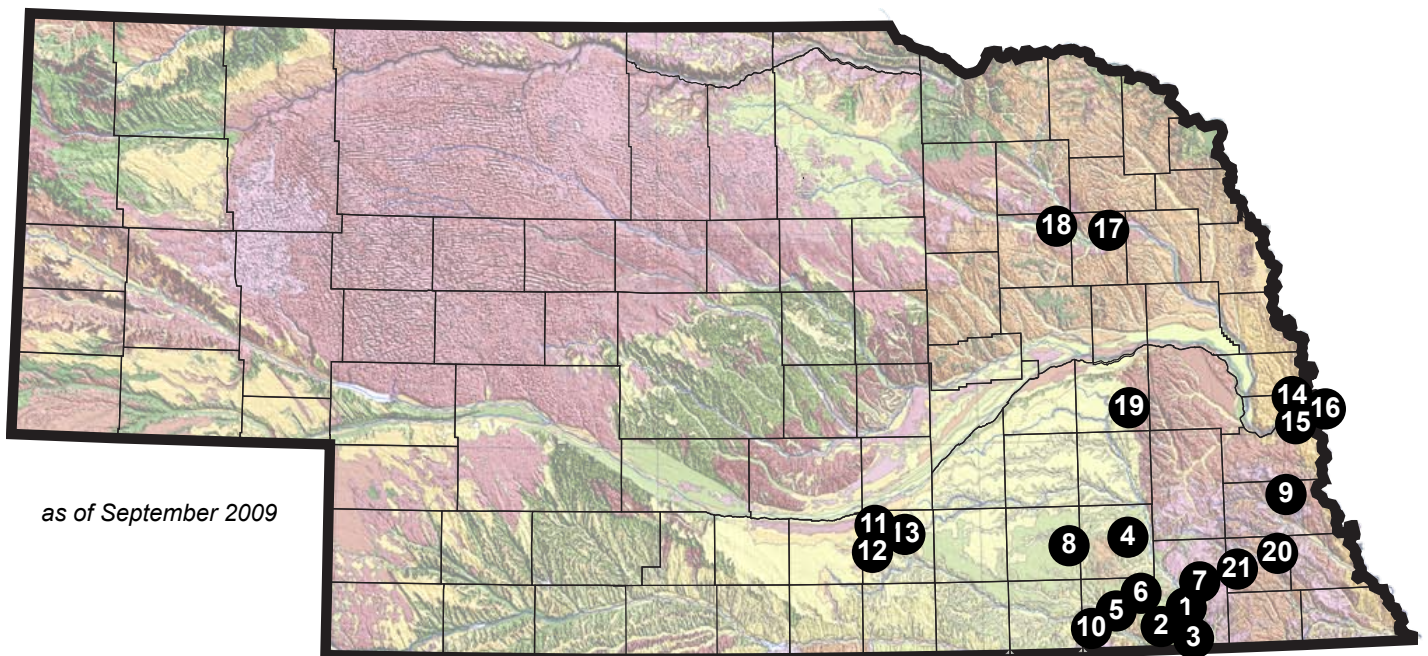
sediment and erosion control, and bridge and road damage reduction. The Lower Platte South NRD is the project sponsor.

Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund continued from p.1

Tracts of land acquired by fee title **must be disposed of (resold) within ten years** of the tract purchase date. Each tract is first offered, at the current appraised value, to a local subdivision of government such as adjacent cities, villages, counties, NRDs, and state agencies such as the Nebraska Games and Parks Commission for public use. **To date 21 tracts have been retained for public use** by these entities. If no entity shows interest in purchasing the tract it is then sold to the highest bidder at public auction. A conservation easement is attached to the title of tracts sold to ensure that the land remains adequately treated and the conservation

measures installed, including reservoirs, remain for 25 years after the date of sale. The proceeds of the sale are returned to the Fund and are used for future land rights acquisition assistance. When needed, the Fund receives appropriations from the legislature to help finance future flood abatement projects. With these appropriations, along with the proceeds from fee title tracts, land rental, and interest monies, the Fund has continued to meet the demand for land rights acquisition assistance and has helped in the development of local flood abatement projects throughout the state. Recreational benefits are also enjoyed by Nebraskans on the retained public use tracts.

Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund
tracts retained for public use



as of September 2009

Project	Structure	Acres	Location	Retained by
1. Big Indian Watershed	11-A	356.5	4 miles South, 1 mile West of Wymore	Lower Big Blue NRD
2. Big Indian Watershed	5E & 5F	353.0	3 1/2 miles West of Odell	Game and Parks Commission
3. Big Indian watershed	16-C	320.0	3 1/2 miles West, 4 miles North of Odel	Game and Parks Commission
4. Walnut Creek	2	17.7	2 1/2 miles North, 1 mile East of Crete	Lower Big Blue NRD
5. Cub Creek	12-A	134.9	2 miles East, 3 miles North of Jansen	Lower Big Blue NRD
6. Cub Creek	9-B	84.5	3 miles South, 1/4 mile East of Plymouth	Lower Big Blue NRD
7. Mud Creek	4-J	433.6	3 1/2 miles East, 1 1/2 North of Holmesville	Game and Parks Commission
8. Swan Creek	2	160.0	7 miles East of Milligan	Game and Parks Commission
9. Wilson Creek	2X & 2-23	40.0	3 miles East of Otoe	Game and Parks Commission
10. Buckley Creel watershed	3-F	97.6	1 mile East, 1/2 mile North of Reynolds	Little Blue NRD
11. 32-Mile Watershed	D	107.0	3 1/2 miles East, 5 miles South of Kenesaw	Little Blue NRD
12. 32-Mile Watershed	D	4.1	3 1/2 miles East, 5 miles South of Kenesaw	Little Blue NRD
13. 32-Mile Watershed	H	160.0	3 miles South, 1/2 mile East of Juniata	Little Blue NRD
14. Sarpy R-O-W	R-613	18.0	2 1/2 miles North, 1 mile East of LaPlatte	Sarpy County
15. Missouri River Levee	R-616	8.5	Bellevue	Papio-Missouri River NRD
16. Missouri River Levee	R-616	79.5	Bellevue	City of Bellevue
17. Pilger Watershed	1-B	118.2	1 mile North, 1 mile East of Pilger	Lower Elkhorn NRD
18. Corporation Gulch	1-A	107.3 plus lots	Norfolk	City of Norfolk
19. North Oak Watershed	6-C	160.0	1 mile South, 2 miles East of Brainard	Lower Platte South NRD
20. South Branch Little Nemaha	27	46.8	2 miles West, 4 miles South of Cook	Nemaha NRD
21. Middle Big Nemaha	46	194.2	2 miles South, 2 1/2 miles East of Crab Orchard	Game and Parks Commission

Multiple Efforts Addressing Missouri River Management

By Steve Gaul

If you like acronyms, Missouri River studies and programs provide a bonanza. MRRIC, MRERP, MRAPS and the AOP are currently subject to participation and monitoring by NDNR and MORAST. However, fun as the names might be, the issues are serious for Nebraska – **the only state that is entirely within the Missouri River Basin.**

Management of the Missouri River is currently primarily led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with reservoir system management in accordance with the Missouri River Master Manual. Efforts underway may ultimately alter river management and affect the distribution of costs and benefits that management provides. The issues may arise in part from what the distribution of costs and benefits would be under different options.

Currently, with public input as well as consultation on historic properties, the Corps produces an Annual Operating Plan (AOP) designed to meet reservoir regulation objectives in the Master Manual. **The existing authorized purposes for which the Corps manages are flood control, navigation, irrigation, power, water supply, water quality control, recreation, and fish and wildlife.**

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) provides input to this and other efforts in part through serving on the Board of Directors of the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MORAST). This regional interstate

organization was formed by joint resolution of the Governors of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas and the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition. It serves as a forum for better communication and helps facilitate management of the natural resources of the basin.

The NDNR is also the Nebraska representative to the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC), which is a collaborative forum to develop a shared vision and a comprehensive plan for restoration of the Missouri River ecosystem. The committee involves a wide spectrum of stakeholders and is to provide recommendations on efforts to recover threatened and endangered species and restore their habitats while sustaining the river's many uses. While federal agencies will not participate in decisions regarding recommendations, they will support and inform the committee through a federal working group.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission provides the Nebraska representation for the Missouri River Ecosystem Restoration Plan (MRERP). The plan is intended to identify the actions necessary to mitigate, recover and restore the Missouri River. The planning process is to

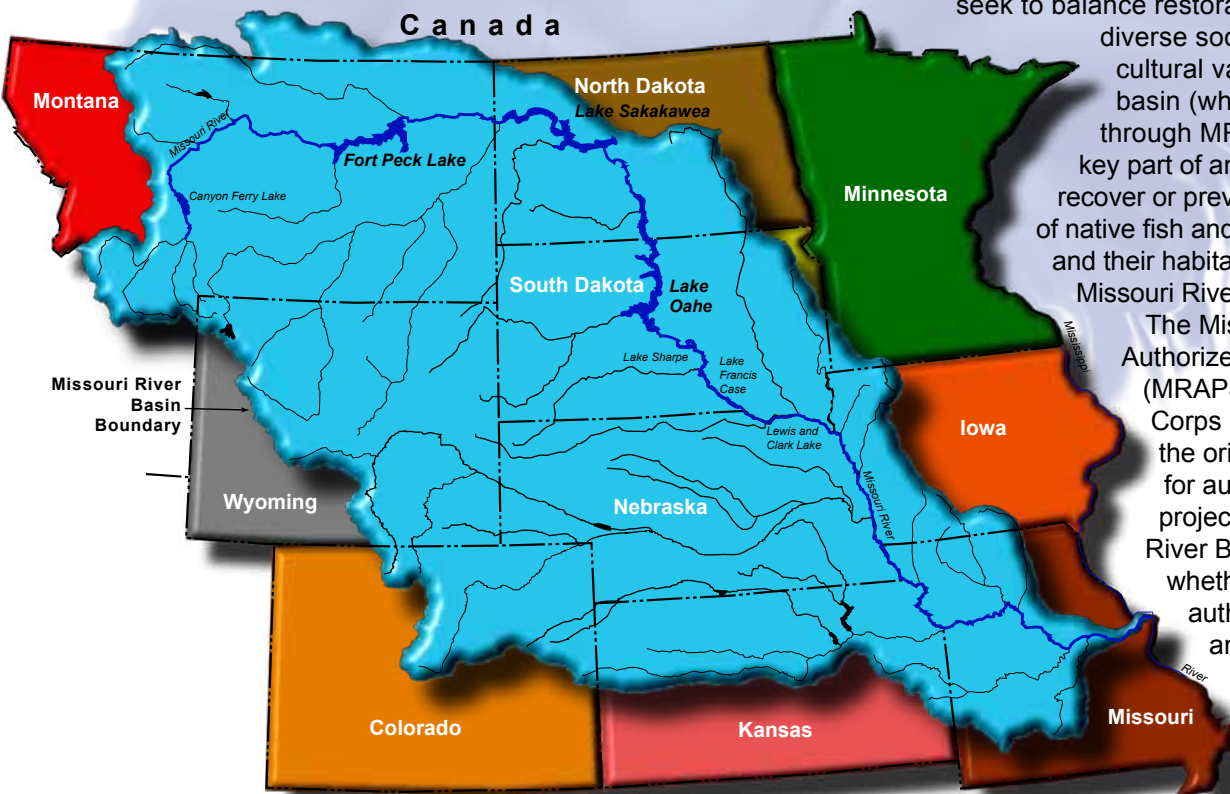


seek to balance restoration actions with diverse social, economic, and cultural values within the basin (which are determined through MRRIC). The plan is a key part of an extensive effort to recover or prevent further declines of native fish and wildlife populations and their habitats and to restore the Missouri River ecosystem.

The Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study (MRAPS) is a separate Corps led effort to review the original eight purposes for authorized federal projects in the Missouri River Basin and determine whether changes to the authorized purposes and infrastructure may be warranted. This is a major effort authorized by

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Missouri River Basin



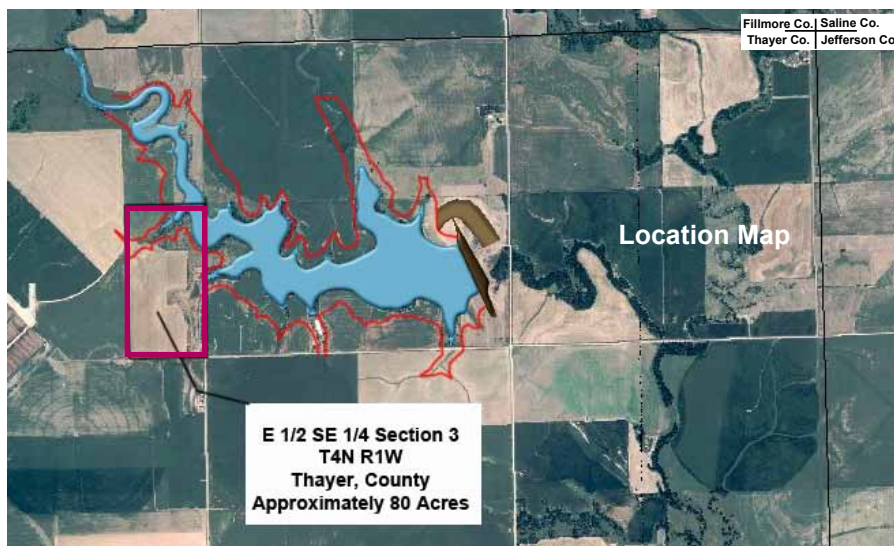
Land Auction January 13, 2010

By Kent Zimmerman

The Little Blue NRD and the Department of Natural Resources' Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund will auction off an 80 acre tract of land in the E1/2 SE1/4 of Section 3, Township 4 North, Range 1 West of the 6th P.M. in Thayer County, Nebraska on **Wednesday, January 13, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. at the Little Blue NRD office in Davenport.** This 80 acre tract is part of a 400 acre tract purchased by the fund for the purpose of building Site #40, one of the NRD's Little Sandy Creek Flood Control project dams. The remaining 320 acres are scheduled for sale during 2011.

Additional Information can be found at

<http://dnr.ne.gov/LittleSandyCreek>



First Nebraska Floodplain Conference a Success

By Gloria Bucco

One hundred and two people representing 39 counties and 49 communities attended the state's first Conference for Floodplain Managers on July 31, 2009, at the State Office Building in Lincoln. The Conference was sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) and the Nebraska Floodplain and Stormwater Manager's Association (NeFSMA). Its purpose was to provide a forum for the state's floodplain managers and other interested parties to learn and network.

Of the 102 attendees, 46 were floodplain managers, and the remaining 56 were consultants and other community officials. One consultant traveled from Kansas City, Mo.

Attendees were welcomed by Brian Dunnigan, director of NDNR, and Laurie Carrette-Zook. Six seminars were offered including:

- FEMA Elevation Certificate Workshop
- Structural and Non-structural Options for Reducing Flood Losses
- Emergency Management for Floodplain Managers
- Floodplain Management 101
- Hydrology and Hydraulics for the Non-engineer
- Flood Insurance Basics and the NFIP

Featured speakers were Dean Ownby, an Insurance Program Specialist with Federal Emergency Management Agency Region VII; Steve McMaster, NDNR Natural Resources Planner Coordinator; Cindy Newsham, Response and Recovery Division Manager with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Bill Jones, NDNR Floodplain Management Specialist; and Shuhai Zheng, NDNR Floodplain Management Section Chief.

During the luncheon, attendees heard a keynote presentation by Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Public Works Special Project Administrator in Watershed Management for the City of Lincoln.



Missouri River Management
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the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, Title 1, Section 108. Its official kickoff was October 1, 2009. It is a broad-based multipurpose study that has the opportunity to identify options to provide more multi-purpose benefits, facilitate discussion of tradeoffs and efficiencies, and evaluate river management options in relation to current values and priorities.

Interestingly, even with all of these major efforts there are additional federal efforts occurring on the river such as the Missouri National Recreational River, the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project, and the Corps revised Regional Sediment Management Program.

The NDNR both monitors and participates in this variety of Missouri River related activity and has separately solicited input for its Missouri River Association of States and Tribes representation through meetings with stakeholders. As the Corps studies and other efforts move forward, the challenges may well involve how to develop sound information for a balanced analysis that provides options for addressing the needs of all Missouri River stakeholders in a fair, cost effective, and sustainable manner. This may be a tall order no matter what acronyms are used.



2009 State of Nebraska Employee and Supervisor/Manager of the Year Awards

Since 1985, state government, on behalf of the Governor’s Office, has sponsored a recognition program honoring both exceptional state employees and career service employees. Governor Heineman proclaimed the month of October 2008, as State of Nebraska Employee Recognition Month and a ceremony honoring the Employees/Managers of the Year was held in the State Capital Rotunda on Monday, October 26, 2009. At that ceremony Governor Heineman presented awards to the honorees. In addition to that ceremony, several Length of Service ceremonies were also held across Nebraska during the month of October honoring employees for their length of service to the State of Nebraska.



The **2009 Supervisor of the Year** for the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) is **Rex Gittins**, supervisor of the Management Services Division of NDNR. Rex has been with the Department for 6 years and supervises 17 employees in the division that maintains; IT operations and development, payroll, finance and state property, public information, administration of natural resources funds and business process services. Rex also works closely with the 16 member Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, natural resources districts and the general public in managing state funds administered by the NDNR. Rex is eager to take on challenges while striving to enhance his staff’s abilities by distributing assignments and allowing employees to work independently under limited direction. Rex is always accessible, listens to his staff’s comments and ideas and is a pleasure to work with and for. The NDNR appreciates Rex’s efficiency and professionalism, attributes that make him very deserving of the Supervisor of the Year Award for the NDNR.



Receiving the **2009 Employee of the Year Award** for the NDNR was **Stacey Kolar**, a Natural Resources Specialist with the Ord Field Office in central Nebraska. Stacey is an extremely versatile employee performing a multitude of tasks since starting with NDNR in 2006. His wide range of skills include working with electronic streamflow records, proficiency in Global Positioning System and ArcView softwares, and dealing with individuals and outside companies on water and water rights issues. With these skills and Stacey’s strong work ethic he is a asset to the NDNR.

The skills, dedication, and performance of both of these employees have helped the Department tremendously over the year in accomplishing its goals and objectives. The Department staff and the State would like to congratulate both of these exceptional people on their awards and thank them for their continued outstanding service to Nebraska and its citizens.

 Length of Service Awards	
Employee	Years of Service
Wendy Evans.....	10
Jeff Hogan.....	10
Shane Wright.....	10
Claude Denn.....	10
Leaudria Foster.....	10
Pam Bonebright.....	15
Shuhai Zheng.....	20
Rick Vollertsen.....	20
Sinda Severns.....	20
Tom Klanecky.....	30
Laurel Gower.....	30
Cheryl Byler.....	30
Harold “Butch” Turek.....	30
Danny Studnicka.....	35
Bill Jones.....	35
Allan Ruhge.....	50

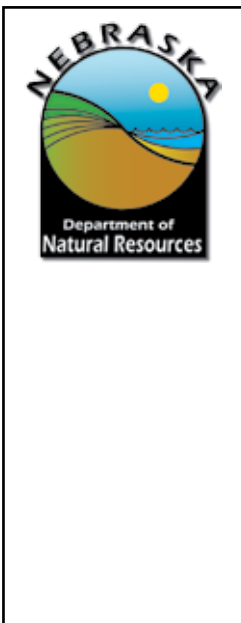
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Department of Natural Resources
Brian P. Dunnigan P.E., Director

The *Nebraska Resources* is a quarterly publication of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. Your comments and or suggestions are welcomed.

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Nebraska Water Policy Task Force Completes Work

By Steve Gaul

The **Nebraska Water Policy Task Force** held its final meeting on October 20, 2009 and is scheduled to sunset on December 31. The Task Force was created by LB 1003 in 2002 and charged with making recommendations on a variety of tasks related to surface water and ground water use and water transfers. It subsequently produced a report and draft language that helped contribute to introduction of LB 962 in 2004. Passage of that bill provided major changes in how Nebraska addresses management of interrelated surface water and ground water. The Task Force also monitored implementation of the resulting statutes and provided additional water policy related recommendations. The Task Force began work in July 2002 and through time seventy individuals served in the 50 task force positions. Task Force membership included representation from a variety of interests. The Department provided administrative support for the Task Force and we would like to express our thanks for the hard work of these individuals and for the group's accomplishments.

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources....

....dedicated to the sustainable use and proper management of the State's natural resources.