



Sand & Soapweed

Newsletter of the *Middle Niobrara Natural Resources District*
“*Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future*”

SUMMER 2010

Why Should I Test My Well Water?

Testing your private well's water quality on a regular basis will help ensure that the water source is being properly protected from potential contamination, and that appropriate treatment is selected and operating properly. The only way to tell if your drinking water is safe is by having it tested at a certified laboratory. Harmful bacteria, parasites, and viruses are invisible to the naked eye, so water which looks and tastes good may not necessarily be safe to drink. With the heavy rains this summer it is even more important to test your well for contamination. Increased runoff may have found its way into your well as several local wells have tested positive for bacteria after the heavy rains earlier this year.

The Middle Niobrara NRD will send your water sample to a certified lab for testing. There is no charge for nitrate sampling, but a fee is charged for other types of water samples. Contact Reed or Tim at the NRD office for more information.

NSWCP Funding Down

Due to state budget cuts funding for the NSWCP (Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program) program is down more than 7% for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Because of this shortfall the MNNRD will not be able to fund as many of your conservation projects. Unfortunately this leaves many of our landowners and conservationists in a bad position. We had applications for many beneficial conservation projects this year that did not receive funding. The NSWCP program has helped fund thousands of conservation projects since its inception in 1977 but unless state revenues get back to normal the prospects for increased funding next year do not look good. In fact, it is very possible that we could see another decrease in funding from the state.

Interested land owners and conservationists should take every opportunity to let our elected officials know that they are concerned about the decrease in funding for these worthy conservation practices. Without continued conservation efforts in Nebraska your children and grand-children will not be able to enjoy the wildlife and scenery that we take for granted today. Nebraska: “The Good life”!

Chemigation Inspections Completed for 2010

Middle Niobrara NRD received 353 applications for Chemigation Permits in 2010. Of the 353 applications received 348 were renew applications and 10 were new applications. All permits were approved. MNNRD personnel inspected 197 chemigation systems in 2010. A total of 29,196.33 acres were reported as treated with chemigation in 2009.

The following fertilizer formulations were reported as applied in 2009 on at least one 2010 Chemigation Permit application:

32-0-0-0	28-0-0-10
28-0-0-5	24-0-0-7
12-0-0-26	24-0-0-0
32-0-0-5	28-0-0-6
30-0-0-2	0-0-25-17
24-0-0-10	0-0-15-10
30-0-0-5	19.33-8.39-7.1-7.1
24.7-0-1.8-6.3	

Total amounts (lbs) applied:

Nitrogen	Phosphorus	Potassium	Sulfur	Zinc
2736362.35	42020.30	12801.95	12801.95	0

The following pesticides were reported as applied during 2009 on at least one 2010 Chemigation Permit application:

Chemical	Amount
Lorsban	24 gallons
Cornerstone	35.5 gallons
Brigade 2EC	152 pounds Ai

Water Learning Seminar Planned for November 30th

The Middle Niobrara NRD is planning a water learning seminar for November 30th, 2010 located in the Johnstown Ag Society Building at the Brown County Fairgrounds. Senator Deb Fischer is scheduled to attend and give an overview of legislation that may affect the local area in the future. Middle Niobrara NRD staff will also give an overview of how current legislation is applied to the local area and what efforts are being made to protect water quality and quantity. Many guest speakers will be attending with additional topics to be covered including: Irrigation efficiency, technologies for more precise irrigation management, sub-surface drip irrigation, well decommissioning and water well standards, rangeland management and grazing practices, etc. There will also be many opportunities for question and answer sessions. CEU credits will be applied for so look and listen for advertisements in your local newspaper and on your local radio station.

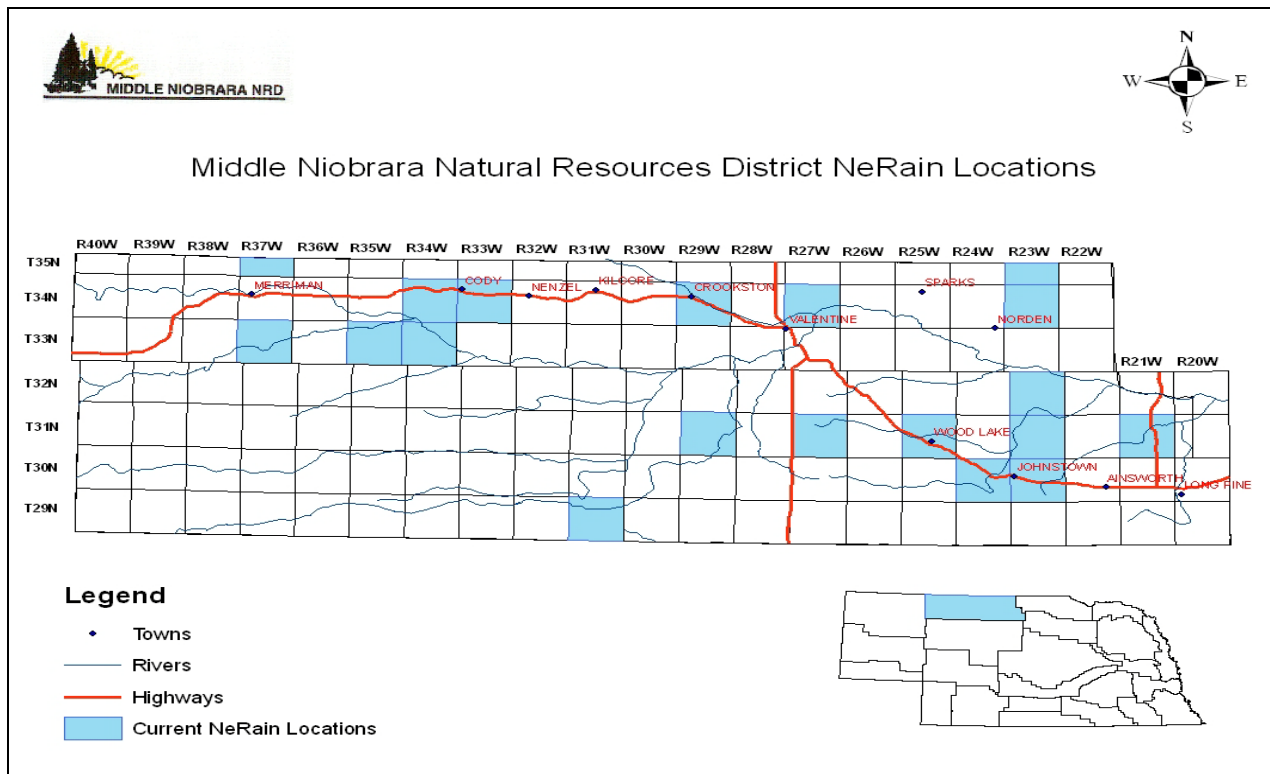
Tree Order Form

Included in this newsletter is the tree order form for persons interested in planting trees next spring. This form should be completed and returned to the NRD office in Valentine by October 31, 2010. When your order is confirmed, you will be billed a 50% deposit for the cost of the trees. If there is a shortage of species, the orders will be filled on a first come first serve basis. The last day to cancel an order is December 30th. If orders are cancelled after the deadline, your deposit will not be refunded. Please complete the name, mailing address and phone number sections so we can contact you when the trees arrive in early April. Also, indicate in the appropriate box where you would like to pick your trees up. Pick up days will be scheduled for the Ainsworth and Valentine areas.

The NRD can special order trees that are not on the list provided, but the cost may be higher due to shipping and which nursery they are ordered from. We encourage you to place all orders by the October 31st deadline.

NeRain volunteers still needed.

The ultimate goal of NeRain is to have one volunteer per township. If you are interested in spending a few minutes recording precipitation in your area using a backyard rain gauge provided by us please contact Tim Storm at 402-376-3241. The map below shows where current volunteers are located. NeRain measurements are recorded on a database and many types of maps and reports can be produced with this information. Below is a report of the data recorded at the Middle Niobrara NRD office.



for office use: Date _____
 Called _____

Bundled _____
 Date _____
 Wrapped _____

Conservation Tree Program Order Form

Name: _____ Telephone: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Please check the location where you prefer to pick up your seedlings. Valentine _____ Ainsworth _____

EACH SPECIES MUST BE ORDERED IN LOTS OF 25

- | CONIFERS | DECIDUOUS | SHRUBS | POTTED CONIFERS
(order in lots of 30) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| _____ Eastern Redcedar | _____ Kentucky Coffee Tree | _____ Manchurian Apricot | _____ American Plum |
| _____ Rocky Mt. Juniper | _____ Black Walnut | _____ Crabapple | _____ Lilac |
| _____ Colorado Blue Spruce | _____ Native Cottonwood | _____ Hazelnut | _____ Service Berry |
| _____ Austrian Pine | _____ Hybred Cottonwood | _____ Buffaloberry | _____ Skunkbush Sumac |
| _____ Jack Pine | _____ Hackberry | _____ Chokecherry | _____ Red-Osier |
| _____ Ponderosa Pine | _____ Honeylocust | _____ Elderberry | _____ Dogwood |
| _____ SW White Pine | _____ Amur Maple | _____ Sandcherry | _____ Rocky Mt. Juniper |
| _____ Black Hills Spruce | _____ Silver Maple | _____ Purple Chokeberry | _____ Eastern Red Cedar |
| _____ Concolor Fir | _____ Diamond Willow | _____ Cotoneaster | _____ CO. Blue Spruce |
| _____ Norway Spruce | _____ Golden Willow | _____ Golden Currant | _____ Ponderosa Pine |
| | _____ Bur Oak | _____ Nanking Cherry | _____ Austrian Pine |
| | _____ Russian Olive | _____ Caragana | |
| | | _____ Honeysuckle | |

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ORDERS

The tree order form is for conservation trees that you will be planting yourself. If you want the NRD to help design a windbreak, or machine plant your trees please contact the MNNRD office at (402) 376-3241 or 1-800-891-7645

DEADLINE for ordering trees is *October 31, 2010*
 (some species *maybe* available after this date)

NO GUARANTEES ON TREE SURVIVALBILITY
 You will be billed for a 50% deposit when your order is confirmed.
 We'll call you when your trees arrive in early April.

BAREROOT: .85 EACH (minimum 25 trees)
POTTED 1.50 EACH (minimum 30 trees)

Return your order to
 Middle Niobrara NRD
 526 E. 1st St.
 Valentine, NE 69201

Water Quality Cost-Share Changes Approved for 2011

The Middle Niobrara NRD Board of Directors approved a higher limit on water quality cost-share for 2011. Approved practices are now eligible for 50% cost-share up to \$2,500. The previous limit was set at 50% up to \$2,000. This increase in cost-share limit is due primarily to the increasing cost of gated pipe and other materials needed for irrigation efficiency enhancement projects. This also means that fewer projects will likely be approved, however, in the past few years cost-share monies have been available after the sign up period. Practices eligible for cost-share include open ditch to gated pipe conversions, surge valve installation, and high to low pressure nozzle conversions on center pivots. Official sign-up is from November through December. Please contact Reed Welke at the Valentine office if interested.

Green Schools

"A staggering 20% of America is in a school each day – teachers, administrators, staff and most importantly, children. These are the very ones future generations will look to for leadership in times of both change and challenge. By promoting the design and construction of green schools we can make tremendous impact on improving student performance and health, while decreasing operational costs and protecting the environment. (Rick Fedrizzi, CEO, President & Founder, US Green Building Council, *Greening Our Schools*, USGBC, ©2010)

**Green Schools Summit
October 22 and 23
University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus**

The Green Schools Summit is a gathering of teachers, students, parents, administrators, school board members, faculty, government, architects, engineers and industry leaders to learn more about strategies for greening the schools in Nebraska communities. Experts will share case studies from communities that have successfully "greened" their schools, learn about energy audits and financing possibilities, and network with industry leaders in the technology display area. The Green Schools Summit will provide information and resources anyone can use to build timelines and action plans for creating more energy efficient, innovative and healthy schools.

Visit our website at: <http://research.unl.edu/events/greenschoolsummit/>.

"Only after the last tree has been cut down...the last river has been poisoned...the last fish caught, only then will you find that money cannot be eaten."

- Cree Indian Prophecy-



Applications are currently being taken for the Annual Sandhills Chapter Pheasants Forever Youth Mentor Hunt to be held on Sunday, September 26th in Ainsworth. To be eligible, the participant must be 12 to 15 years of age and have successfully completed a Nebraska Hunter Safety Course. The youth will have an opportunity to participate in blue rock shooting, shotgun patterning and cleaning, game cleaning and a pheasant hunt complete with experienced hunting dogs. Information will also be provided by Nebraska Game and Parks personnel. Anyone interested can pick up applications at Northern Plains Supply in Bassett, the Middle Niobrara NRD office in Valentine, or at Buckle's Automotive in Ainsworth. This annual hunt is limited to 12 youth participants, so please pick up your applications as soon as possible. The applications need to be returned by September 15th. Any youth that have completed applications in the past and were not chosen to participate will have their application reconsidered and will not be required to complete another application this year. This annual mentor hunt is a great opportunity for youth to share the hunting experience with many volunteers and members of the Sandhills Chapter of Pheasants Forever.

