

# Connections

Connecting people to resources.

Northeast Nebraska RC&D: [NENERCD.ORG](http://NENERCD.ORG)

Spring 2013

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## Chair in the Corner

### Scratch for an Itch

Sustainability seems to be a popular topic lately. It is of little value to obtain a desired outcome if sustaining the desired condition cannot be supported.

“Rural Sustainability” was the title of this year’s Western RC&D Association Conference, and a variety of topics including social networking and business planning were addressed there. For Resource Conservation and Development organizations to continue, they must be perceived as indispensable agents of information and application for topics that support and sustain natural and human resources.

Certain needs can be better served through cooperative and organized efforts. Conserving and developing resources is an example best served in this manner. Yet, before any group can be helpful, the group itself must be sustained, and in order to earn that sustenance, it must be perceived as useful. It’s a bit like the old saying, “If you’ll scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.”

*(continued on p.2...)*

## Husker Ag guests RC&D Council’s March meeting

The March RC&D Council meeting was held on March 25 at the RC&D office in Plainview. After the RC&D Council welcomed a new member, Bob Huntley from the Lower Elkhorn NRD, Husker Ag Ethanol’s general manager Seth Harder spoke about the state’s ethanol industry.

Nebraska is second only to Iowa in world ethanol production. Husker Ag produces ethanol as well as modified wet distillers grain and feed-grade corn oil, and have recently entered into a partnership with Laurel Bio-Composites to make a plastic filler. Seth also talked about the blender pump initiative, which provides financial incentives to gas stations that want or need to upgrade existing pumps, that Husker Ag is coordinating with the Nebraska Corn Board.



*RC&D Council President Dennis Wacker of Pierce County created a variety of handmade wooden items as a contribution to the Western RC&D Conference auction. Here is Dennis, right, visiting with another woodworker, Kit Sutherland from Montana, during the auction.*

## Conference Report

RC&D Council members Dennis Wacker of Pierce County and Jerry and Susan Fields of Antelope County, with RC&D program coordinator Jan Jorgensen, reported on their



*Nebraska RC&D representatives at the 10-state Western RC&D Conference*

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(... continued from p.1) There you have it. If you have an itch that you can't quite reach and a little "scratch" you'd be willing to share, a deal could be worked out and more itches could be scratched. So share a little scratch with your local RC&D, sustaining them as they work to relieve some of the itching that seems to be going around. I think I'm getting a rash.

Itching to help,

*The Chair in the Corner,*  
Dennis Wacker, President

## Carol Peters resigns, RC&D welcomes new staff

It is with regret that the Northeast Nebraska RC&D Council accepted Carol Peters' resignation from her position as program support assistant on January 28. Carol was an excellent employee and had served the Council well since March 2008. She held the group together after the USDA removed their financial and technical support in April 2011. Her health is improving, and the Council and staff wish her well in her recovery.

At the end of September 2012, former RC&D program coordinator Jan Jorgensen accepted a part-time position with the RC&D Council. She is working two days a week as a project coordinator.

In January, Dick Haskin was hired as a part-time employee to handle financial and administrative duties for the RC&D Council. He had been serving for 6 years on the RC&D Council as a representative from Antelope County.

participation in the Western RC&D Conference held March 17-20 in Gering. In the Western RC&D Association, which represents 10 western states, there are 67 active Councils.

The Northeast Nebraska RC&D received the Outstanding Council Award, and the Plainview FFA was honored with the Outstanding Youth Involvement Award for their assistance in 2012 with the E-Waste Recycling project.

Since the loss of federal funding in April of 2011 Councils all around the country have been struggling to find their way, but many are succeeding by developing new partnerships, finding new funding streams, working out alternate office situations, and maintaining their positive attitude of working to help their local areas. They've had to get creative in their endeavors to survive. In the Western Association, out of 97 original local RC&D Councils, only 12 dissolved their organizations and another 6 are currently inactive.

A number of the conference speakers focused on marketing to the next generation through social media and website development, which was identified as the best way to reach this targeted group. Information was also shared on grant sources that help fund environmental projects. Leaders of several federal agencies gave their thoughts on how the RC&D Councils might continue to work with programs they have available. And Councils shared their success stories with each other.

Joyce Mick, Panhandle RC&D Program Support Assistant was elected to serve the Western RC&D Association as Treasurer, and Bobbi Meints, Executive Director of the Five Rivers RC&D in Tecumseh, was named the Award Committee Chairperson. Bobbi was also recognized as the Outstanding Coordinator/Executive Director for 2012.

## Next Meeting

The RC&D Council wants to continue providing services and assistance that are needed by citizens of the six-county region. All are encouraged and welcome to make suggestions, stop in to share those thoughts, or attend the next board meeting on Monday, April 22, at 6 pm at the RC&D Office.



RC&D Council member Larry Wright Sr. of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska is selling two of his original drawings as a fundraiser for the Northeast Nebraska RC&D.



The Outstanding Coordinator/Executive Award winner at the Western RC&D Association was Bobbi Meints of the Five Rivers RC&D in Tecumseh, shown with Joe Leichtnam, Western Association Awards Chair.



The Outstanding Council Award winner at the Western RC&D Association was the Northeast Nebraska RC&D Council.



## RC&D Presented Awards at Annual Meeting

The Northeast Nebraska RC&D Council's annual meeting was held November 26, 2012, at Grand Central Restaurant & Bookstore in Creighton. After touring several local businesses, the group continued the evening with dinner and an awards program.

RC&D Vice President Virginia Buerman of Knox County presented the 2012 awards. Stan Baier of the Lower Elkhorn NRD received the Outstanding Council Member Award. Carol Peters was named Outstanding Program Support Assistant. Her tenacity, willing spirit, and sound business practices were invaluable to the continuation of the RC&D program. Outstanding Youth Involvement Award went to the Plainview FFA for their assistance on the E-Waste Recycling project, which was also selected as Top Project for the year. Council members were reminded of their Nebraska award as Outstanding Council of 2012.

The 2012 Annual Report was given by RC&D Secretary Janet Gill of Knox County. Many things were accomplished with the support of generous financial donors, sponsors, and the good work of the volunteer Council members. Janet complimented everyone on their contributions.

RC&D President Dennis Wacker thanked outgoing board members Virginia, Stan, and Dick Haskin for their service. New officers elected for 2013 were: Dennis Wacker, President, Pierce County; Glen Anderson, Vice President, Cedar County; Susan Fields, Secretary, Antelope County; and Janet Gill, Treasurer, Knox County.

## RC&D Project updates

RC&D project updates include:

- E-Waste Recycling – Collections will be held on the Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays through April 25 at the RC&D office in Plainview from 10 am to 4:30 pm. Additional recycling events will be held in Niobrara, Ponca, Jackson, Pierce and Plainview in May.
- Northeast Nebraska Weed Management Area – The RC&D Council has been notified of a pending Nebraska Environmental Trust Award, whose funds of \$24,733 will be used to purchase biocontrol agents for Purple Loosestrife and Leafy Spurge on sites where there are threatened or endangered plant species like Small White Lady Slipper or another challenge, conduct an aerial survey of these weeds, and offer educational activities for landowners. This is Year 2 of this project. Final notification of the award will be made later in April. Other project activities this year will include Saltcedar eradication along the Missouri River from Ft. Randall Dam to Sioux City as well as provide awareness and educational information to the public through signage, handouts at Nebraska state parks, and a summer tour on bio-control insects.

- Showcasing Entrepreneurs – Many people in the area are very talented but have few places to show off their work or products and sell them. For many years the RC&D office has provided such a place to local entrepreneurs during their regular office hours. In the past, in order to have items displayed and sold by RC&D, the vendor was required to have an Associate membership to the Northeast Nebraska RC&D. At the February meeting, the RC&D Council voted unanimously to continue the Showcase Entrepreneur Program for 2013 with certain changes to hopefully make it easier for vendors to display and sell their items here: Vendors are no longer required to have an Associate membership; instead, vendors will be allowed to display and sell their items on a consignment basis. RC&D will promote and market the vendors through the newsletter, website, Facebook page, local news releases, and special events and activities at the RC&D office. Learn more about current featured entrepreneurs and other products, crafts, and books for sale at the RC&D at [www.facebook.com/northeastrcd](http://www.facebook.com/northeastrcd).



Scott Martin's hand-blown glass and Shirley Hoffman's sewing items are a few of the products on display and for sale through the RC&D Showcasing Entrepreneurs project.



- Well Drillers & Water Operators Tour – The RC&D Council is partnering with the Nebraska Well Drillers Association to host an educational tour for well drillers, water operators, and others in the industry that need continuing education hours. The motor coach tour will be held this fall and will highlight the Wau-Col Regional Water System and the geothermal systems at Ponca State Park. The tour will cover the hydrology of the area, NRD groundwater

management, general water concerns of communities, and long-term impacts of the 2012 drought on aquifer conditions. Participants will view the award-winning video, “Geothermal: From the Ground Up,” prepared by the Nebraska Well Drillers Association and discuss changes in water well standards applicable to geothermal construction practices.

## Brad MaMon wants to bring young families into the area

Brad Mahon is among several new RC&D Council members. He represents Knox County and lives on a farm near Verdel with his wife Shannon. They are expecting their first child in June. Brad has a cow/calf operation and feedlot, and raises irrigated crops. He also is involved in the Lower Niobrara NRD.

Brad hopes his involvement in the RC&D Council will find ways to bring other young families into the area. He sees the RC&D Council’s most valuable asset being promotion of the area and communities. He believes the RC&D Council will be pivotal for developing the area for the next generation of community and rural residents, and he’s looking forward to getting involved in any way possible.





## Save the Date

April 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, 23-25

### E-Waste Recycling Days, 10 am-4:30 pm

Northeast Nebraska RC&D office, Plainview

\* Get rid of your unused or broken electronics not allowed in landfills. There is a \$5 fee for each computer monitor, a \$5 for "anything that prints" (copiers, scanners, fax machines, or printers – very large copiers will be charged \$0.20/pound), and \$10-\$25 fee for each TV depending on size. Computer keyboards, towers, mice, phones, fax machines, DVD and VCR players, speakers, microwaves, small copy machines, printers, and other electronics will be accepted with a free-will donation. Contact the RC&D office at 402-582-4866 or [northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net](mailto:northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net) for more information, or check out the website at [www.nenercd.org](http://www.nenercd.org).

April 22

### RC&D Council Meeting, starts at 6 pm

Northeast Nebraska RC&D office, Plainview

The public is welcome to attend. Contact the RC&D office at 402-582-4866 or [northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net](mailto:northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net) for more information, or check out the website at [www.nenercd.org](http://www.nenercd.org).

April 27-28

### Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway Trail Ride

Horse Thief Canyon, Lynch

The public is welcome to join in, to enjoy the scenic beauty of Doc Middleton Country on Nebraska's Outlaw Trail. For more information, call Al Brock at 402-376-1164 or visit [www.nebraskaaoutlawtrail.org](http://www.nebraskaaoutlawtrail.org) or [www.aqha.com](http://www.aqha.com).

May 14

### E-Waste Recycling Day (See details above\*)

9 - 11 am: Ponca Tribal Headquarters Office, Niobrara

1-2:30 pm: in Ponca location to be announced

3-4 pm: in Jackson location to be announced

May 16

### E-Waste Recycling Day (See details above\*)

10:30 am-12:30 pm: Pierce Telephone Co. 112 S 5th St., Pierce

1:30-3:30 pm: Northeast Nebraska RC&D office, Plainview

May 18-19

### Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway Trail Ride

Niobrara River Ranch, Valentine

The public is welcome to join in, to enjoy the scenic beauty of Doc Middleton Country on Nebraska's Outlaw Trail. For more information, call Al Brock at 402-376-1164 or visit [www.nebraskaaoutlawtrail.org](http://www.nebraskaaoutlawtrail.org) or [www.aqha.com](http://www.aqha.com).

June 28-30

### Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway Trail Ride

Kid Wade Canyon, Butte

The public is welcome to join in, to enjoy the scenic beauty of Doc Middleton Country on Nebraska's Outlaw Trail. For more information, call Al Brock at 402-376-1164 or visit [www.nebraskaaoutlawtrail.org](http://www.nebraskaaoutlawtrail.org) or [www.aqha.com](http://www.aqha.com).

July 11

### Habitat Tour in Cedar County

Hartington area

The Habitat Tour in Cedar County will be held east and north of Hartington along Nebraska Hwy. 15. The land to be visited maintains a perpetual CRP easement and has been seeded to a mix of native grasses and forbs, and planted and managed under a variety of treatment options. This is a free event, but registration will be requested. Contact the RC&D office at 402-582-4866 or [northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net](mailto:northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net) for more information, or check out the website at [www.nenercd.org](http://www.nenercd.org).

Sponsors are Pheasants Forever, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Pheasants Den, and the Northeast Nebraska RC&D Council, with partial funding from Nebraska Environmental Trust.

Plans are in progress to add evening activities of wine tasting, a pheasant dinner, and a program. These activities would require a fee and would be open to both tour participants and others. The event would be limited to 40 people.

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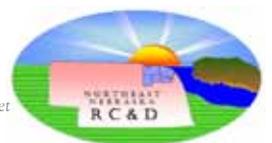
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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide news and updates from the Northeast Nebraska RC&D Council on its projects and activities impacting the six-county area:

- Antelope
- Dixon
- Pierce
- Cedar
- Knox
- Wayne

The RC&D is led by a Council consisting of local volunteers supported by a small staff, and works to improve the quality of life for citizens in Northeast Nebraska through job creation and economic development, community improvement, tourism promotion, agricultural support, and environmental conservation.





## About the RC&D Council

The RC&D Council is made up of 24 positions, each appointed by their county boards to serve a three-year term. The Council members, all volunteer, attend regular monthly meetings, serve on committees, and assist projects of their choice.

Anyone interested in serving Northeast Nebraska through economic, community, and rural development should contact the RC&D office. Otherwise, feel free to contact any member of the RC&D Council with questions, comments, or suggestions for projects to enhance and benefit Northeast Nebraska, particularly the counties of Antelope, Cedar, Dixon, Knox, Pierce, and Wayne.

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