



Upper Loup Scoop

Upper Loup NRD

October 2013

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Calendar of Events

October

10	Board Meeting: ULNRD Office 7pm
14	Office Closed: Columbus Day

November

11	Office Closed: Veterans Day
14	Board Meeting: ULNRD Office 7pm
28, 29	Office Closed: Thanksgiving

December

12	Board Meeting: ULNRD Office 3pm
25	Office Closed: Christmas Day

Work To Update Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan Beginning

For every \$1 spent on hazard mitigation, \$4 in post storm cleanup and rebuilding is saved, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Proactive hazard mitigation planning allows a community to take actions to reduce or eliminate threats from natural disasters. To help guide future hazard mitigation projects, Upper Loup Natural Resource District is undertaking an effort to update the region's Hazard Mitigation Plan, originally approved by FEMA in August of 2009. The current Upper Loup Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan will expire August 2014.

A hazard mitigation plan is a publicly-guided document that identifies vulnerability to natural disasters such as flood, drought, earthquake, wildfire, winter storm, tornado/high wind storm, dam failure, etc. The plan establishes goals, outlines specific mitigation options, and prioritizes projects which may reduce or eliminate loss of life and potential damages to property when future disasters occur. Public input will be gathered throughout the duration of the plan development through online tools and public meetings. All communities, public school districts, and other taxing authorities within the NRD are eligible to participate.

For more information on this planning effort, contact Anna Baum, Upper Loup NRD General Manager, at 308.645.2250 or by email at abaum@upperloupnrd.org.

Leafy Spurge—Pretty Wildflower or Pretty Costly?

Leafy spurge is an invasive, herbaceous perennial weed that infests more than five million acres of land in 35 states and the prairie provinces of Canada. It causes significant problems by invading grazing lands for cattle and horses, reducing rangeland productivity and cattle carrying capacity by 50-75 percent, decreasing plant diversity, degrading wildlife habitat, displacing sensitive species and drastically reducing land values.

The use of herbicides for leafy spurge control is just one part of long term management that should include good grazing strategies and can include grazing by sheep or goats or biological control by the release of insects. It's important to continue yearly management as skipping a year can allow leafy spurge to re-infest rapidly.

To help with the Leafy Spurge battle the Upper Loup Natural Resources District provides cost share funds for BOTH fall and spring treatment to landowners in the NRD area. Applications for cost share assistance can be obtained by contacting Upper Loup NRD at 308-645-2250 or downloading an application from our website at www.upperloupnrd.org.

Upper Loup NRD Held Annual Junior High Field Day

On Wednesday, September 4, the Upper Loup NRD office held their annual Junior High Field Day for area students. Seventh and eighth graders from Thedford, Dunning, and Mullen traveled to the NRD office to learn about forestry, range, wildlife, water, recycling and wind energy.

The sessions were presented from the Upper Loup NRD staff along with help from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Office in Thedford, Chris Hobza from the United States Geological Survey office in Lincoln and Sue Pearman from the UNL-Sandhills Extension Office. Students learned about forestry through a Jeopardy game. The range session was held at the NRCS office where students were taught about grass, wildflowers and other plants in our area. Students became investigators in the wildlife session where they identified animal tracks and other clues to figure out what happened with animals. In the water session, students were able to walk in the Middle Loup River to learn about stream flow. Students created a recycled art project of something that represented natural resources. Small-scale wind turbines were constructed in order to better understand how wind energy works.

The students really enjoyed the hands-on learning experience and left with more knowledge of natural resources. New activities are already in progress for next year's Junior High Field Day.



Tree Planning Services

Trees provide important benefits such as protecting homes and livestock from wind and snow, helping to reduce heating and cooling costs, preventing soil erosion, and providing wildlife habitat. The Upper Loup NRD offers tree program services including: planning, planting, weed barrier installation or weed control, and drip irrigation.

A well-planned drip irrigation system can have a tremendous impact on a young tree's survival and growth. The systems improve tree survival rate by providing water to the seedlings during the hot, dry summer. The systems also allow for more efficient watering of seedlings by dripping the water where and when the plants need it, with little or no evaporation and virtually no runoff. The cost share for drip irrigation systems is only provided for those placed on electric wells.



Fall is a good time to think about tree planning. The ULNRD provides a 65% cost share along with free tree planning services. Trees and shrubs (excluding small acreage package), planting, weed mulch, and drip irrigation systems are all eligible for the cost share program. For more information about these services you can contact Kyle at 308-645-2250.

Water Use Reports in Mailboxes Soon

Water use reporting is essential to the management of this vital resource. Annual reporting is important to protect stakeholder interests, adopting actions in times of water emergencies, and providing data for effective farm management. To protect the farmer's and rancher's interests in any litigation related to the state's right to water use in a given basin, existing water uses must be able to be qualified. **(Continued on page 3)**

CONSERVATION JEOPARDY

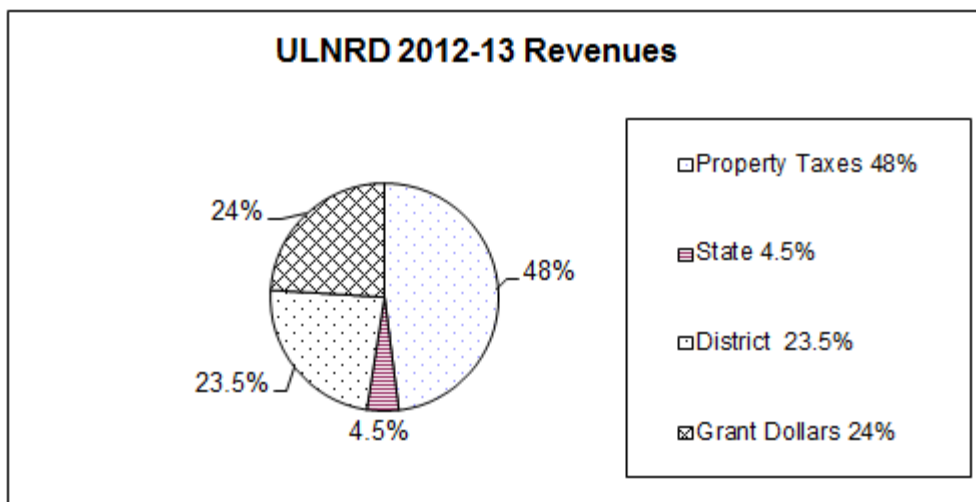
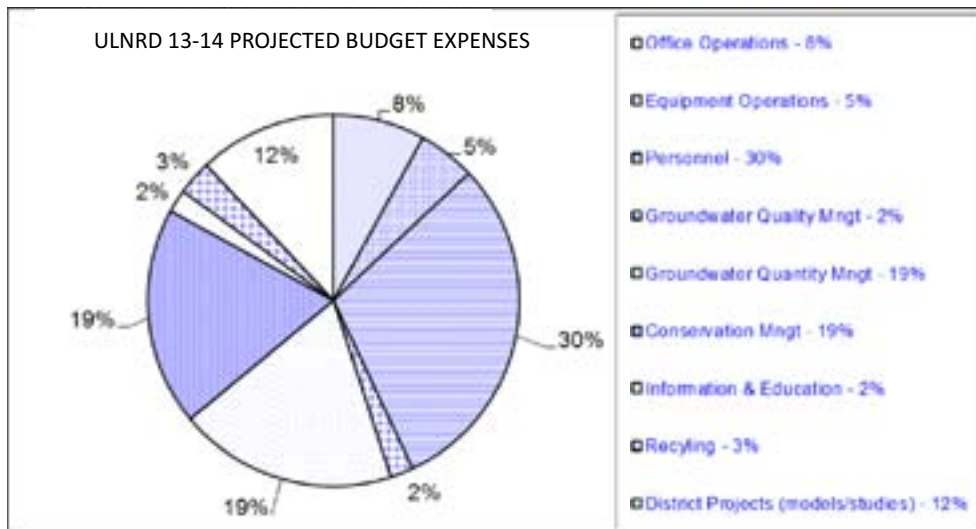
1. In 1945, Nebraska's nickname was changed to the "Cornhusker State." What was Nebraska's original nickname?
2. Nebraska farms and ranches utilize what percent of the state's total land area?
3. What is the longest river in the United States?
4. Where is the mouth of the Dismal River located?
5. Which river is home to Nebraska's largest waterfall?

Answers on page 4

(Reports, cont'd from page 2) We will be mailing out report forms to irrigators soon. Wells with flow meters installed will be read by NRD staff. Please return your information as soon as possible, even if you didn't irrigate in 2013, we need to know that. There are four ways you can report your information: 1) mail 2) fax information to 308-645-2308 3) call in to 308-645-2250 or 4) email to Taylor at tspencer@upperlounprd.org.

Budget News

In September the Upper Loup NRD Board of Directors adopted the budget for fiscal year 2013-14. NRD's have the option to levy up to 4 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation. We are proud to say that since 1990 we have been able to fund our programs, conservation studies and services with the same levy rate of 2 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation. To date less than half of our budget is supported by tax dollars. Some of the programs and services we provide include tree and shrub planning and planting, Soil & Water Conservation cost share, water quality testing, water quantity monitoring, well decommissioning cost share, wildlife habitat improvement, no till drill rental, yard enhancement cost share, leafy spurge cost share, soil testing cost share, chemigation inspections, recycling, Hazard Mitigation Plan development, sponsorship of several youth camps and more!



Projects in Progress

Upper Loup Natural Resources District has received a flowmeter grant opportunity for a "Ground Irrigation Management Project." Funding is to be used to offer flowmeters and crop water sensors to irrigators. Due to the increasing demands of water for irrigation, it is important that long-term water usage is managed in a sustainable and equitable way. Quantifying the amount of groundwater utilized for irrigation is essential for water and nitrate management.

Eligible wells for flowmeters are any legally registered irrigation well that was drilled prior to 2008 and is actively being used. Due to the number of flowmeters we have available we are allowing each producer up to 5 flowmeters. You have until April 30, 2014 to install the flowmeter. We ask you to please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in this opportunity so that we may properly allocate the flowmeters.

As a condition of receiving a flowmeter you as the participating landowner agree to pay for installation and allow the District access to the monitoring site so that the meter can be read in the fall or at the end of the irrigation season. Only impeller driven flowmeters will be cost-shared on. The NRD will reimburse you 100% of the actual cost of the flowmeter up to \$1,700.00. For more information please contact our office at 308-645-2250.

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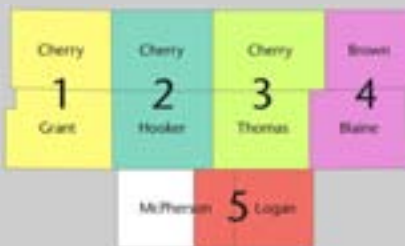
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www.upperloupnrd.org

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ATTENTION IRRIGATED LAND OWNERS:

If you are selling or purchasing ground in the Upper Loup NRD District, you must have appropriate paperwork for transferring ground. Please contact our office at 308-645-2250.

CONSERVATION JEOPARDY ANSWERS

1. Tree Planter's State 2. 93% 3. Missouri River 4. Near Dunning 5. Snake River

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