



Upper Loup Scoop

Upper Loup NRD

October 2014

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Calendar of Events

October

- 9 Board Meeting:
ULNRD Office 7pm CT
- 13 Office Closed:
Columbus Day

November

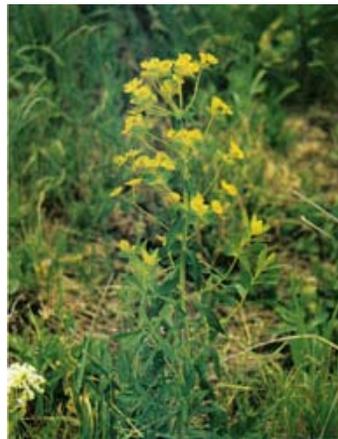
- 11 Office Closed:
Veteran's Day
- 13 Board Meeting:
ULNRD Office 7pm CT
- 27-28 Office Closed:
Thanksgiving

December

- 11 Board Meeting:
ULNRD Office 3pm CT
- 25 Office Closed:
Christmas Day

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.

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. 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 2014, 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@upperloupnrd.org.

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 **(continued on page 2)**

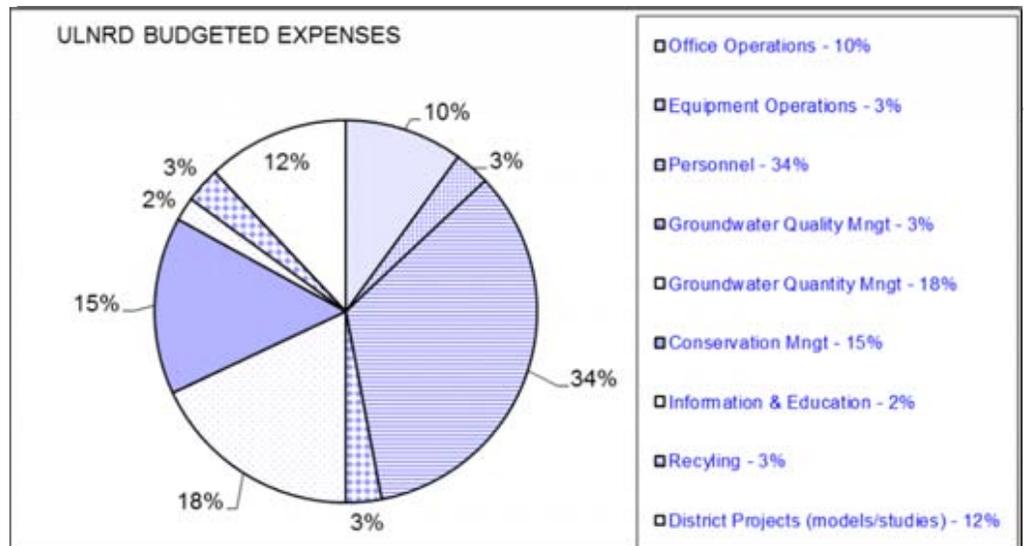
(Tree Plans, continued from page 1) rate by providing water to the seedlings during the hot, dry summer. The systems also allow for more efficient watering of seedlings by dripping the water where and when the plants need it, with little or no evaporation and virtually no runoff. The cost share for drip 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.



Budget News

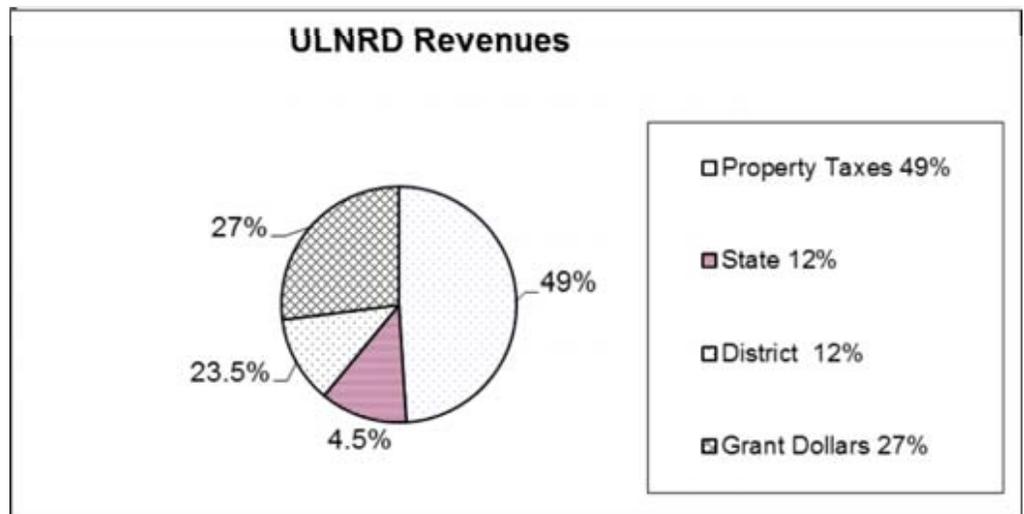
In September the Upper Loup Board of Directors adopted the budget for fiscal year 2014-15. NRD's have the option to levy up to 4 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation. We are proud to say that since 1990 we have been able to fund our programs, conservation studies and services with the same levy rate of 2 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation. To date, just 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.



CONSERVATION JEOPARDY

- PET is the standard technical term for what type of recyclable product?
A. Plastic B. Petroleum C. Aluminum
- True or False: The main parts to the water cycle are: evaporation, precipitation, condensation, transpiration, and collection.
- True or False: Sediment from erosion can be reduced by planting grass and trees and mulching areas.
- How do tree roots grow?
A. Deep (>12 inches) B. Wide (2-3x width of the tree) C. Both
- What is the title for someone who cares for trees?
A. Treeologist B. Tree Scientist C. Arborist

Answers on page 4



Annual ULNRD Field Day

On Wednesday, September 3, 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, natural resources, range, water, wildlife, and 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, Sue Pearman from the UNL-Sandhills Extension Office, and Drew Larsen from Pheasants Forever in North Platte. The range session was held at the NRCS office where students were taught about grass, wildflowers and other plants in our area. In the energy session, students learned about which household appliances save the most on energy. In the water session, students



were able to walk in the Middle Loup River to learn about stream flow. Bees and butterflies were the main topic of the pollinator activity that was taught to students during the wildlife session. Students learned more about natural resources through a Jeopardy game. In the forestry session, students were educated about proper tree planting techniques and newly planted tree care.

The students really enjoyed the hands-on learning experience and left with more knowledge of energy, wildlife, and natural resources. This year was the third year the ULNRD held their Field Day. New sessions and activities are already in progress for next year's Junior High Field Day.

Fabric Conservation Mulch Strangulation

Trees and windbreaks are very important to farms, ranches, homes, livestock and wildlife. Trees can also provide protection and a healthy environment, but only if they are properly cared for. If you have planted new trees within the last four to five years and installed the fabric conservation mulch around the trees, now is the time you need to be watching the trees to make sure the fabric mulch is not strangling the growing trees.

The fabric mulch protects the tree as a weed barrier, but it can also hurt or even kill the tree if not properly cared for. Since trees grow wide, the fabric may need to be cut frequently around the tree to allow continued proper growing. If the fabric mulch around the trees are not trimmed, it will slowly result in strangulation and death of the tree.

Recycling Update

The Upper Loup NRD accepts lick tubs (supplement tubs) for recycling. You can drop the tubs off at the office by the recycling shed. If you have other items that you are unsure if they can be recycled or not, please ask us.

Projects in Progress Important Information About Renting No-Till Drill

There are many positive benefits of using a No-till drill such as increasing soil health, reducing runoff contaminant in surface waters, as well as reduced labor and fuel thus increasing net farm income. The Upper Loup NRD is happy that it can provide two No-Till Drills—one 10 foot drill and one 20 foot for producers to use. Due to the increased repairs that the NRD has had to perform, it is now policy that the drills will all be delivered by NRD personnel only effective immediately.

New delivery rates are: \$35.00 for deliveries 0-20 miles (one way) from the office, \$55.00 for deliveries 21-60 miles (one way) from the office and for deliveries greater than 60 miles (one way) from the office the charge is \$70.00. Drill rental rates for the 10 foot drill for crop seed are \$8.00 per acre plus tax. For the 10 foot drill for flower seed is a minimum of \$75.00 or 12.5 acres at the \$8.00 per acre plus tax. The 20 foot drill rents for \$14.00 per acre plus tax. If you have any questions or would like to rent the drill please contact Taylor at our office at 308-645-2250.

Tree Survival Checks

Kyle is currently checking recently planted trees in the District to see how they are growing.

ULNRD Staff

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Eastern Red Cedar Control Demonstration

On Tuesday, October 14, 2014, there will be an Eastern Red Cedar control demonstration east of Ringgold—at the Gay Brown/Dale Wilson ranch. The day will start in Stapleton at the Community Center, 236 Main Street at 10:00 AM CT. Speakers will address the economic impact of Red Cedar encroachment, NRCS Cost Share Programs, and GrassSnap Range Monitoring programs will be discussed. Lunch will be on your own. The demonstration will begin at 1:00 PM CT.

There is no cost for the program and demonstration. The Sandhills RC&D received a grant through the Nebraska Environmental Trust to purchase a skid steer with a tree shear/saw that will be available for rent to area landowners. Participating agencies and vendors include the Upper Loup NRD, NRCS, Central Sandhills Extension, Murphy Tractor and Equipment, Titan Machinery and NMC Cat. For more information, please contact the Sandhills RC&D office at 308-546-0636.

CONSERVATION JEOPARDY ANSWERS

1. A. Plastic 2. True 3. True 4. B. Wide 5. C. Arborist