



Upper Loup Scoop

Upper Loup NRD

October 2015

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Calendar of Events

October

7	North Central Land Judging - LLNRD
8	Board Meeting ULNRD Office 7PM CT
10-11	Hunter Safety 1-6pm CT
12	Office Closed: Columbus Day

November

11	Office Closed: Veteran's Day
12	Board Meeting: ULNRD Office 7PM CT
26-27	Office Closed: Thanksgiving

December

10	Board Meeting: ULNRD Office 3PM CT
25	Office Closed: Christmas Day

Historical Agreement Signed for Niobrara River

The Niobrara River Basin Alliance, a group of five Natural Resources Districts (Upper Loup NRD, Upper Niobrara-White NRD, Middle Niobrara NRD, Lower Niobrara NRD, and the Lower Elkhorn NRD), the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), signed a historical agreement on September 16, 2015. The Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) document sets the framework to preserve the future of the Niobrara River Basin.

Under the MOU, the parties will work with the NPPD, to take steps towards transfer of assets, including NPPD's water appropriations on the Niobrara River, Spencer Hydro dam, and the lands and easements associated with the dam. The NRD's involved are developing local Voluntary Integrated Management Plans with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. The plans are designed to protect the existing water users in the basin and to safeguard the water supply for future uses.

Several pieces will need to fall into place such as securing funding and seeking legislative authority to convert NPPD's water right to multi-use water rights before the plan comes to fruition. If that happens, the Game and Parks commission and Natural Resources Districts would jointly own the dam, land and water rights, which would be used for recreation and the needs of fish and wildlife, as well as the protection of economic activity like agriculture. The details of how the dam and land would be managed have yet to be decided.

Hunter Safety Education Class

On Saturday and Sunday, October 10th and 11th, a Hunter Safety Education Class will be held at the Upper Loup NRD Office. The class will begin Saturday at 1:00 PM Central Time. Anyone born on or after January 1, 1977, is required to carry proof of completion while hunting. Anyone younger than 11 may take the course but will not be certified. They must also be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Anyone under 18 must give instructor a signed and completed Parental Release Form. Please register online for this event at outdoornebraska.ne.gov/hunting/programs/

Successful Fourth Annual ULNRD Field Day

On Wednesday, September 2, the Upper Loup NRD held their fourth annual Field Day at the office in Thedford. Seventh and eighth grade students from Thedford, Sandhills/Dunning, Mullen and Stapleton traveled to the ULNRD to learn about water, wildlife, range, wind energy, forestry, natural resources and recycling.

The ULNRD Staff presented some of the sessions to the students that included a forestry session at the park in Thedford; the topic *(continued on page 2)*

(Field Day, continued from page 1) of natural resources was demonstrated with an oil spill activity; a “crime scene investigation” activity was presented for the wildlife session; and a Jeopardy-style game was played to learn more about recycling. Chris Hobza and assistant Kayla from USGS (shown in picture) presented a Water Quality and Quantity session in the Middle Loup River. Bethany Johnston, Extension Educator from the Central Sandhills UNL-Extension, presented a range session at the NRCS office about types of grasses. Sue Pearman, Extension Educator also from the Central Sandhills UNL-Extension, presented a session about wind energy.



The students really enjoyed the hands-on learning experience and left with a better knowledge of natural resources. The Upper Loup NRD is already working on new plans for next year’s Fifth Annual Field day.

Fall is the Time to Start Tree Planning

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.

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 or to make an appointment for your tree plan, contact Shane at 308-645-2250.



Mulch Collar Lament

Adapted from Tom Moser, Lewis and Clark NRD

I took a walk through my tree belt one day
 And noticed some signs of distress.
 The trees to me were choking, you see,
 From mulch too good for the test.
 The holes that were made for young trees to parade
 And grow without weeds, nor water,
 Had now trunks that had fledged and filled to the edge
 And were trapped in a fatal collar.
 The solution to the “collar,” though minor to follow,
 Still takes some physical labor.
 A cutter, you see, applied by the tree
 Will rip a new hold much greater.
 If you planted trees before 2009
 Then there is a task that needs to be done.
 For the tree belt we share, was planted with care,
 But the maintenance is only by you.
 The lesson that’s learned is to check the concern
 To determine if one has a tree problem.
 For the mulch that was laid, was worth more than was paid,
 But it also might damn-near kill them.

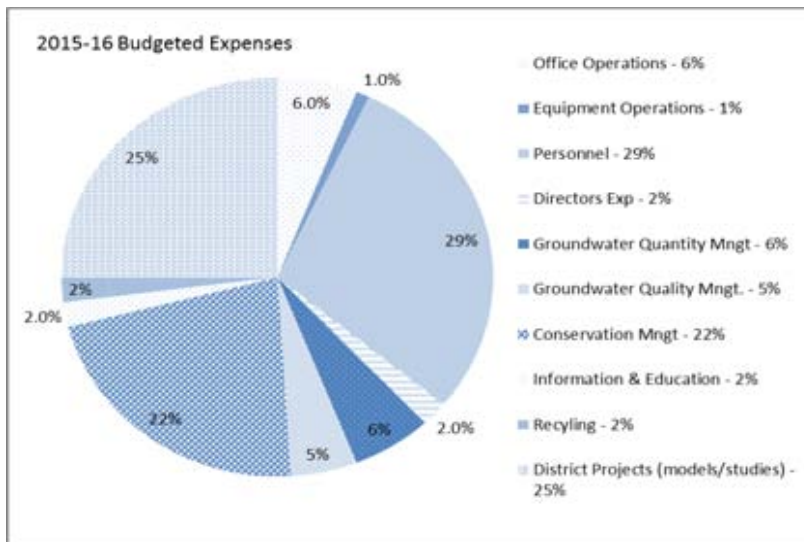
CONSERVATION JEOPARDY

1. True or false: The direction a water current flows is called a set.
2. What is the only substance found on earth naturally in three forms?
 A. Clay B. Water C. Dirt
3. How long is the Panama Canal?
 A. 125 miles B. 328 miles C. 44 miles
4. The Platte River empties into what river?
 A. Big Blue River
 B. Missouri River C. Elkhorn River
5. True or false: Soil is the primary surface water pollutant in Nebraska.

Answers on page 4

ULNRD Board Approves 2015-2016 Budget

On September 10th, the Upper Loup Board of Directors adopted the budget for fiscal year 2015-2016. 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 several conservation practices, provide a wide variety of services, as well as, take part in several conservation studies with the same levy rate of 2 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation. To date, less than half our budget is supported by tax dollars (44%). One way we have been able to accomplish this is by using other funding mechanisms such as grants. *(Levy Rate Summary on page 4)*



Mullen Grade School Receives Nature in Neighborhoods Grant

The Nature in Neighborhoods grant supports hands-on activities and environmental education programs that protect and contribute to watershed health in the District. The program connects community-minded people to their neighborhoods, natural areas, backyards and beyond. In addition, this program is intended to encourage awareness, appreciation, knowledge and active conservation of natural resources. The Upper Loup NRD was honored to reward the Mullen Grade School with this Grant.

"We wanted to beautify a scarred area," said Roxann Brown, Mullen Elementary teacher. And that is just what they did. Students helped with planting flowers, decorating stepping stones, moving dirt and placing landscaping materials in the area northeast of the grade school. A bench was built in the middle of the area to sit and enjoy the outdoors, and even catch a few butterflies landing on the flowers.

For more information about the Nature in Neighborhoods grant or how you or your organization can apply for the grant, please visit our website at www.upperloupnrd.org/nature-in-neighborhoods/



Projects in Progress

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 2015, we need to know that. Please report your information by: 1) mail, 2) fax information to 308-645-2308, 3) call the office at 308-645-2250, or 4) email to Taylor at tspencer@upperloupnrd.org.

Recycling Reminder

The Upper Loup NRD would like to remind everyone in the District that we DO NOT accept glass. If you have any items that you are unsure if they can be recycled or not, please stop in and ask or call the office at 308-645-2250.

Tree Survival Checks

Shane will be going around the District to conduct tree survival checks over the next few months. He will also be working on tree plans. If you are planning on planting trees in the spring, please contact Shane to get on the list and set up an appointment at 308-645-2250.

ULNRD Staff

Anna Baum

General Manager

Taylor Spencer

Resources Technician

Shane Young

Resources Technician

Leslie Harvey

Administrative Secretary

Jack Brummet

Recycling Coordinator

Lacey Sabatka

Information & Education

Pam Petersen

Field Office Secretary

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Richard Burnside

At Large

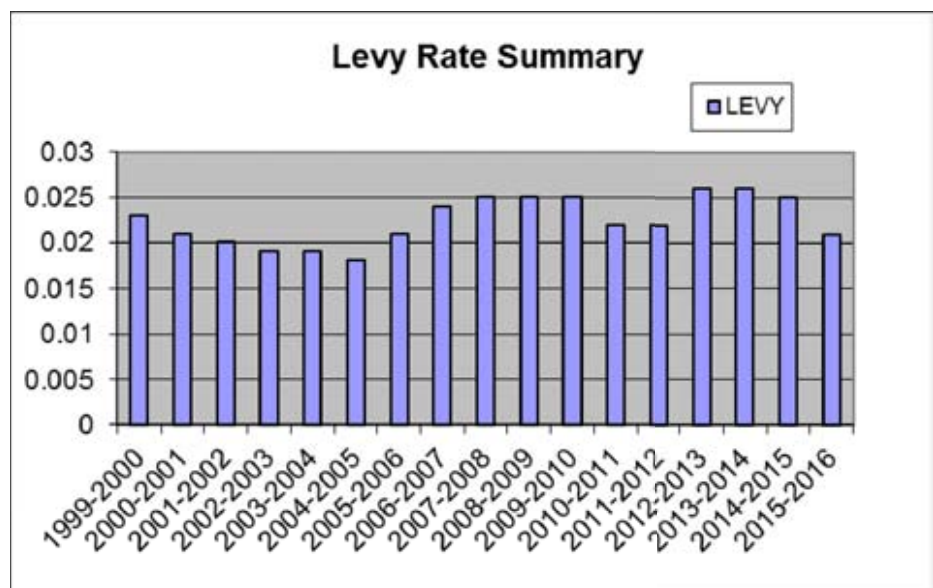
Bobbie Jo Christensen



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CONSERVATION JEOPARDY ANSWERS

1. True 2. B. Water, in liquid, solid and gas 3. C. 44 miles 4. B. Missouri River 5. True