

Winter 2021

Volume 35, Issue 1

Tri-Basin Topics

A quarterly publication of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District

South Central Water Conference February 2, 2021

The 2021 South-Central Water Conference will be held Thursday, February 2nd at the Phelps County Ag Center and virtually through Zoom. Join us for coffee and doughnuts at 9:30 a.m. Sessions will begin at 10:00 a.m. The conference is free of charge and a lunch will be provided for those attending. The program should conclude by 3 p.m. A full agenda for the event will be posted at www.tribasinnrd.org as soon as it is available as well as how to access the Zoom link.

The conference is sponsored by Tri-Basin Natural Resources District, Lower Republican Natural Resources District, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, UNL Extension, and Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce. It is a joint effort to increase the public's understanding of water-related issues in Nebraska. Topics this year will include UNL NRD Groundwater Well Sample Results & Crop Recommendations based on Water Chemistry, Field Imagery for Monitoring Crop Health, 2021 Weather Outlook - Drought Management for Irrigators, and Water Resources Updates from local agencies.

Area agri-businesses will display their products and services at the water conference and will have representatives on hand to visit with conference participants.

Producers in Tri-Basin NRD's Phase II or Phase III Groundwater Quality Management Areas can qualify to receive nitrogen management recertification credit by signing in when they attend the conference.



Keynote Speaker:

Martha Shulski, Nebraska State Climatologist

Other speakers at this year's conference include:
Dr Charles Wortmann, UNL Dept of Agronomy & Horticulture

Tom Riley, Director of Nebraska DNR

Andrea Basche, UNL Dept of Agronomy & Horticulture

Nolan Little, TBNRD

Scott Dicke, LRNRD

Tyler Thulin, CNPPID

Craig Scott, US Bureau of Reclamation



The Tri-Basin NRD Conservation Tree Program is underway!

(See enclosed information.)

Contact Tri-Basin NRD or your local NRCS office for information about planting a windbreak or shelterbelt.

"Dedicated to Conservation of our Natural Resources"

<http://www.tribasinnrd.org>



Manager's Message

by John Thorburn

Tri-Basin NRD Water Conservation Incentive Program Update

The Tri-Basin NRD Water Conservation Incentive Program (WCIP) is intended to address three groundwater management issues: ensuring sustainability of groundwater supplies, protecting streamflows from diminishment due to groundwater pumping and improving groundwater quality in Gosper, Phelps and Kearney counties. The goal of this voluntary program is to reduce groundwater pumping and increase irrigation water use efficiency in Tri-Basin NRD. Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD) launched the Water Conservation Incentive Program (WCIP) for groundwater irrigators in 2019.

In 2020 the TBNRD expanded the program to encourage irrigators with both surface water turnouts and groundwater wells (commingled parcels) to use canal water rather than pump groundwater. This will both reduce the amount of groundwater that is pumped and increase groundwater recharge in the area. TBNRD offers five-year contracts to Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID) customers.

Last year we had a sign-up period for the program that ran from October until March. This year, the NRD board of Directors authorized us to accept applications until the program enrollment limit of 8000 acres is reached. Applications will be ranked on a point system. The ranking process awards points for a variety of specific factors, including location. The need for groundwater recharge is greatest east of US Highway 183, so additional points are awarded to applications for commingled parcels located in eastern Phelps and Kearney counties.

Because NRD funds are limited, a maximum of 8000

acres in contracts can be approved. Individual landowners will be limited to enrolling a total of no more than 320 acres in the WCIP. So far, we have enrolled about 1600 acres in the groundwater option and 3500 acres in the commingled option. Once the enrollment limit is reached, water savings to the district could amount to as much as 7500 acre-feet per year.

Groundwater users who believe that they are efficient irrigators should consider the benefits that WCIP will provide them. In exchange for their participation, landowners will be paid up to \$5 per acre for the equivalent of one acre-inch of water credit per acre per year, with the opportunity to sell additional credits to the NRD at a set price. In addition to NRD purchases, landowners will have the opportunity to sell water credits on the open market at any agreed-upon price (private transactions require NRD board approval). Participants also get flexibility to irrigate any acres within enrolled parcels.

Owners of commingled parcels can enroll in WCIP, if they are willing to limit their groundwater use. If a landowner uses less than one inch of groundwater per acre per year, Tri-Basin will pay them \$35 per acre, fully reimbursing them for the cost of water service provided by CNPPID. If a landowner decides that they need to use more than one acre-inch per acre of groundwater in any year during their contract period, they are free to do so, but the NRD will reduce their reimbursement by \$5 per acre-inch they pump beyond that first inch.

Landowners and irrigators can find out more specific information about Tri-Basin NRD's Water Conservation Incentive Program by visiting our website: www.tribasinnr.org.

New Director Appointed for Subdistrict 1

G. Reed Philips has been appointed to represent subdistrict one on the Tri-Basin Natural Resources District's board of directors. Philips will serve the remaining two years of the four-year term of Phyllis Johnson also of rural Bertrand. Johnson resigned from the board after serving over 25 years.

Philips is the fourth generation of his family living and working on the family farm southeast of Bertrand where he raises row crops and cattle. He and his wife Sheila have four children.

Philips is a graduate of Bertrand Community School and received a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is a member of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, Nebraska Cattlemen's Beef Association, CHS board member in Holdrege, Nebraska LEAD Program (Class 25), Westmark Evangelical Free Church and served eight years on the Bertrand School Board. In his free time, he enjoys golfing, hunting, road trips, old cars, woodworking and following his kids in their sports and activities.

Philips stated that "Serving on the NRD board will give me insights into the intricacies of our natural resources, how to maintain and keep them safe for generations to come, and to be good stewards of them."



Chemigation Renewals

Tri-Basin NRD will be sending out renewal forms to producers who had chemigation permits last year. Those producers whose chemigation certification has expired will need to attend one of the chemigation training sessions held in February and March or complete the online course. For more information about dates and locations for classes call the county Extension Office where you would like to take the class. **Preregistration is required.** Gosper: 308-785-2390, Phelps: 308-995-4222, Kearney: 308-832-0645

Chemigation renewal permits are due in the Tri-Basin NRD office before **June 1, 2021**.

A tall, slender, columnar evergreen tree with a dark trunk and dense green foliage, standing in a grassy field under a clear blue sky. The tree has a central trunk with several smaller branches extending outwards, creating a columnar shape. The foliage is dense and green. The tree is planted in a grassy area, and its shadow is cast on the ground. In the background, there are other trees and a clear blue sky.

Nitro

The Groundwater Quality Protection Act (GWQA) requires the Department of Agriculture to work with farmers and agricultural producers to develop and implement a nitrogen application. These efforts are part of the state's overall strategy to protect the district, safeguarding the health of the state's water resources.

Producers in Phase 1 of the program are required to submit a water sampling and analysis report to the Department of Agriculture. This requirement has expired and will be replaced by a new requirement for producers to submit a water sampling and analysis report to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services. The new requirement will be effective on 0645 Attendance at the meeting. (You must sign in to attend the meeting.)

Producers with irrigated crop ground in Grant Township (5N-13W) in eastern Kearney County should have flowmeters installed on all irrigation wells by December 31, 2021. Cost share may be available, so check with your local NRCS office to apply.

Nitrogen Management Reports for the 2020 crop year were due December 31, 2020. If you have fields in the Phase II or Phase III areas of the Groundwater Quality Management Area and have not turned in your reports, please do so as soon as possible. If you need forms or help filling them out, contact the TBNRD office.

The Groundwater Quality Management Areas established by Tri-Basin NRD have allowed district staff to work cooperatively with farmers and agronomists for more than 25 years to help improve the timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness of fertilizer application. These efforts have resulted in stable or declining nitrate-nitrogen levels in groundwater supplies in much of the district, safeguarding the quality of our groundwater.

Producers in Phase II and Phase III areas of the Groundwater Quality Management Area need to take soil samples this winter and water samples in Summer 2021. Current Nitrogen Management certification is required. Producers whose certification has expired will receive notification in January by mail. Training dates have been set but you must contact the county extension office and preregister for in person classes. Gosper: 308-785-2390, Phelps: 308-995-4222, Kearney: 308-832-0645 Attendance at the South-Central Water Conference on February 2nd also qualifies for Nitrogen Management Certification. (You must sign-in to receive credit.)

Gosper **Phelps** **Kearney**

T8N

T7N

T6N

T5N

R24W **R23W** **R22W** **R21W** **R20W** **R19W** **R18W** **R17W** **R16W** **R15W** **R14W** **R13W**

Represented area shown in red

Phase I
Phase II
Phase III

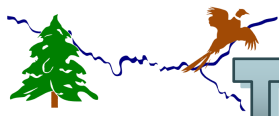
Average sampled N < 9.0 PPM.

Average sampled N > 9.0 PPM. Producers are required to: obtain nitrogen management certification; sample soil & water; and submit crop reports. Application of nitrogen is prohibited September 1 - November 1. *

Average sampled N > 9.0 PPM for 15 years. All producers requirements remain the same as Phase II. Application of nitrogen is prohibited September 1 - March 1. *

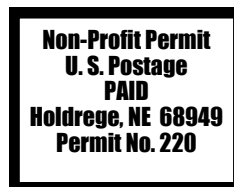
*For more details, groundwater management rules can be found at www.tribasin.org

Not to Scale
February 2, 2015
Tri-Basin Natural Resources District



Winter 2021

Tri-Basin Topics



Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
1723 Burlington St., Holdrege, NE 68949
(308) 995-6688
email: tribasin@tribasinncrd.org
www.tribasinncrd.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nebraska's NRDs: Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future

CALENDAR

January 12NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*

January 18 ... NRD Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 2 South Central Water Conference

February 9NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*

February 15NRD Closed for Presidents' Day

March 9NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*

April 13 NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

April 21-22 Water Jamboree

* Times are tentative. All meetings are at TBNRD office in Holdrege unless otherwise noted.

TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bradley Lundeen, Chairman	Wilcox
Todd Garrelts, Vice Chairman	Holdrege
Robin Hinrichs, Treasurer	Axtell
Joe Bilka, Secretary	Holdrege
Brian Bergstrom	Axtell
Mike Cavanaugh	Minden
David Grimes	Minden
Ed Harris	Loomis
Joe Larson	Loomis
G. Reed Phillips	Bertrand
David Raffety	Kearney
Larry Reynolds	Lexington
Jeff Ryan	Heartwell

TRI-BASIN NRD STAFF

Amy Dutton	Minden Office Secretary
Tammy Fahrenbruch	Water Programs Coordinator
Lori Hagan	Office Clerk
Sasha Hahn	Information & Education Coordinator
Nolan Little	Water Resources Manager
Carie Lynch	Administrative Secretary
Nate Munter	Land Resources Coordinator
Patrick Nott	Water Resources Technician
Nancy Pemberton	Elwood Office Secretary
Tami Reese	Holdrege Office Secretary
Dalton Refior	Land Resources Technician
Esther Smith	Office Assistant
John Thorburn	General Manager
Jeff VanEperen	Water Resources Technician

A mailing list is maintained and requests to be placed on the list should be sent to the above address. Comments and suggestions may be addressed to the General Manager.

Get Tri-Basin Topics in your inbox instead of your mailbox!

To request an electronic version of this newsletter, send an email shahn@tribasinncrd.org.

TRI-BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT 2021 HAND PLANT ORDER FORM

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____ PHONE: _____

ORDERS MUST BE IN MULTIPLES OF 25.

Tree Order Deadline is April 1, 2021.

QUANTITY	SPECIES
	CONIFERS
	AUSTRIAN PINE
	COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE
	PONDEROSA PINE
	RED CEDAR (Eastern)
	NORWAY SPRUCE
	BROADLEAFS
	BLACK WALNUT
	BUR OAK
	HACKBERRY
	RED OAK
	SWAMP WHITE OAK
	HONEYLOCUST
	SHRUBS
	AMERICAN PLUM
	COTONEASTER
	CHOKECHERRY
	ELDERBERRY
	GOLDEN CURRANT
	LILAC
	SAND CHERRY
	SKUNKBUSH SUMAC
	Total # of Trees
	Multiply total # of trees x .85
	Mulch x .35/foot
	Staples x .15
	Subtotal
	Tax (Holdrege 7%, Minden 7.5%, Elwood 6.5%)
	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE/PAID

TREES PROTECT LIVESTOCK

- Increase calf survival by 12%
- Minimize winter stress
- Increase feed efficiency

TREES IMPROVE PROPERTY

- Reduce heating/cooling costs
- Increase property value
- Reduce noise and dust

TREES IMPROVE COMMUNITY

- Lower stress & increase wellbeing
- Improve air & water quality
- Stimulate economic development

TREES PROTECT WILDLIFE

- Provide habitat and food
- Shelter from bad weather
- Cover from predators

TREES IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

- Reduce soil erosion
- Stabilize stream banks
- Filter pollutants

TREES PROTECT CROPS

- Can Increase yields
- Conserve plant moisture
- Reduce wind damage

Tree Pickup will be at: _____ Tri-Basin NRD _____ Minden NRCS _____ Elwood NRCS

WHY PLANT A WINDBREAK?

Windbreaks and shelterbelts provide many benefits. Windbreaks planted along field boundaries reduce soil erosion by reducing wind velocity. Shelterbelts planted around farmsteads reduce heating costs in homes and shop buildings. Shelterbelts can protect livestock from blizzards and serve as "living snow fences." Trees and shrubs also provide food, shelter and nesting habitat for many species of birds and mammals.

NRD TREE & SHRUB PLANTINGS

Contact the NRD Office or your county NRCS for help with determining the type and number of trees and shrubs you need. The technician will make arrangements for the tree order and planting service. The NRD will plant the trees according to the plan.

Trees are planted in the spring as soon as conditions are suitable. The NRD tree planting crew will notify landowners of the approximate date and time of planting.

SITE PREPARATION

Good site preparation is a key to rapid tree growth and survival. The best site preparation begins the year before the trees are planted. On heavier soils, working the ground to kill competing vegetation is an excellent method of preparing the site. The technician assisting in planning a windbreak or habitat plot can advise you about the type of site preparation needed. The technician can also help you determine if herbicide carryover will be a problem.

WEED CONTROL

Weed control in the form of plastic mulch is available through the district. This woven material is installed over the trees after planting. Slots are then cut for the trees. Plastic mulch not only eliminates weeds but also helps to preserve soil moisture.

PRICES

Trees & Shrubs.....	\$0.85 each/multiples of 25
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PLANTING SERVICE

Tree planting (no mulch)	\$0.50/ft
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Trees, tree planting, mulch and mulch installation	\$1.75/ft
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Drip tape	\$0.25/ft
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Drip tape set-up	Minimum \$35.00
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Pull-in Charge	\$50.00
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Renovations*	\$250.00
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Shrub thickets*	\$300.00
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Minimum 500 foot per planting

Plastic Mulch (Material Only).....	\$0.35 per ft
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Stakes.....	\$0.15 each
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Seedling Tubes.....	\$1.10 each
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Prices are subject to change.

*Contact Tri-Basin NRD for site review.

PLANTING YOUR OWN TREES

You can order trees and shrubs at the NRD or your local NRCS Office. Orders must be in multiples of 25 per species. We will send you a postcard when your trees arrive. We also have tree spades available to rent.

DRIP TAPE

Tri-Basin has subsurface "drip tape" available for watering trees planted by the District. The water source could be a portable tank or a hydrant. Check with the TBNRD Land Resource Coordinator for more information.

COST-SHARE

Tri-Basin NRD offers cost-share funds for tree plantings and plastic mulch installation. You should apply at your county NRCS office before March 1.

All sites must be properly prepared before planting to qualify for cost-share. Reimbursement is made only after full payment is received. The minimum total cost of plantings eligible for cost-share is \$500.

Cost-share may also be available from your county USDA office. Pheasants Forever and Nebraska Game & Parks Commission also offer programs for wildlife habitat improvement. NRCS staff can help you determine which programs have funds available and best suit your needs.

BILLING ON NRD PLANTINGS

Tri-Basin NRD bills for trees/tree planting service after completion. Full payment is due upon receipt of the billing. Cost-share payments will not be made until payment is received at the Tri-Basin or NRCS office.