

Tri-Basin Topics

Fall 2009

"Dedicated to Conservation of our Natural Resources"

Volume 23, Issue 4

Tri-Basin NRD Moves into Facility in North Holdrege

After nine months of planning, remodeling and packing, Tri-Basin Natural Resources District moved into its newly renovated office building at 1723 North Burlington Street in Holdrege on June 26.

The building, which was previously North Park Physical Therapy Center, includes offices for staff, a board room and a second meeting area for less formal discussions. It also has a basement, for storage of district equipment and records.

Since the creation of natural resources districts in 1972, Tri-Basin NRD was located at the Phelps County Ag Building in the southern part of Holdrege. The NRD was first located in the area of the building that now houses Central Community College, then later moved south in the building to accommodate a growing staff. The district's work load has increased over the years, and TBNRD staff and record-keeping needs have also increased, making additional office space necessary.

In October 2008, the Tri-Basin NRD Board of Directors voted to bid on the North Park Therapy Building. Phelps Memorial Health Center accepted the NRD's bid. The hospital and the NRD closed the purchase of the building in late 2008. The remodeling process began in the spring of 2009 and is now nearly completed. A few finishing touches are being made to the office



Tri-Basin NRD's new office building at 1723 North Burlington in Holdrege.

space.

"Tri-Basin NRD looked at many other existing buildings in Holdrege," said John Thorburn, TBNRD's General Manager. "We also considered building a new building. This facility is just the right size for us, and we were able to buy it and remodel it for less than half the cost of a new building."

Tri-Basin NRD is planning an Open House at the new building on Tuesday, September 22 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to stop by and check out TBNRD's new facility.

Open House

Tuesday, September 22

2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

At Tri-Basin NRD's New Office
1723 North Burlington, Holdrege

Stop in and check out our new facility!

<http://www.tribasinnr.org>





Manager's Message

by John Thorburn

The Invisible Migration

The Platte River valley is internationally renowned for the spring migration of sandhill cranes and their endangered cousins, whooping cranes. Millions of ducks and geese

also use our Rainwater Basin wetlands south of the Platte as a staging area, where they can pause to rest and fatten up during their Northward journey.

The migration season doesn't end in March, when the geese, cranes and tourists move on. A less noticeable, but equally impressive, spring migration gets underway in April and May. This is the migration of millions of "shorebirds", a term that describes a collection of many different species of wetland-foraging wading birds, primarily sandpipers and plovers.

Shorebirds migrate North in spring and spend a few brief weeks on their breeding grounds, then they head South again as early as mid-July. Shorebirds don't travel in family groups. Some species travel in small, loose flocks in spring, but most fly solo as they head South for winter.

These small, often long-legged birds are champion long-distance flyers. For instance, Pectoral Sandpipers winter at Tierra Del Fuego at the southern tip of South America, but their breeding grounds are in central Siberia. Scientists are still uncertain about how birds find their way across the planet on their epic migrations, but most believe that the Earth's magnetic field provides birds some form of guidance.

Shorebirds were heavily hunted by commercial and sport hunters in the 1800s and early 1900s. Most spe-

cies are now protected by the migratory bird treaty between the US, Canada and Mexico. Limited hunting of snipe and woodcock is still allowed in Nebraska.

Nearly all shorebird species recovered well after hunting was discontinued. One species, the Eskimo Curlew, which was once nearly as common as Killdeer, is believed to be extinct. Piping Plovers and Least Terns are still endangered but their mid-continent populations appear to be slowly recovering.

The primary threat to shorebirds today is no longer hunters, but loss of habitat. Their winter habitat in Central and South America is threatened by logging and pollution. Out-of-control snow goose populations are damaging the Arctic breeding habitat of some species. Habitat along the Platte River is being degraded by invasive phragmites.



Piping plover

Identifying shorebirds can be a real challenge for birdwatchers. One wildlife biologist that I know refers to shorebirds as "LBJs", which stands for "little brown jobs." Many species share similar tan, brown and white color schemes. Birders are then challenged to distinguish them using other characteristics, such as their calls, the color and length of their legs and the shape and color of their bills. Identification can be further complicated by differences between adults and juveniles and changes in plumage within species from spring to fall. In my opinion, however, the difficulty of identification just enhances the resulting satisfaction when you do figure out the species of an LBJ you sight on a wetland.

Shorebirds are migrating South right now. Grab your binoculars and bird identification guide, and go visit the Platte, a nearby wetland or a sandpit. I bet you will be pleasantly surprised to find quite a variety of LBJs. You might even get to know some of them by name.

Nebraska Natives



Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)

Hackberry is a native tree found throughout Nebraska. It has a medium to long life span. Hackberry leaves are elm shaped; the grayish bark has a warty appearance. Once established, a moderate rate of growth and tolerance to adverse weather can be expected. Hackberry can be used in single row windbreaks to slow summer winds and increase the snow fetch over fields during the winter.

Witches broom on branches and nipple-galls on lower leaf surfaces can be unsightly, but have little adverse effect on their health.

The average height of a hackberry tree at maturity is 45 to 55 feet.

<http://www.tribasinrd.org>

Water Use Reminder

Producers who have wells in the Republican Basin, received cost-share for flowmeters, or have wells that were permitted on or after September 15, 2004 are required to have flowmeters installed and annually report their water use. Water Use Reports for the 2009 irrigation season will be available in the Tri-Basin NRD office in late September. If you are ready to complete them at that time, you can stop in the office to pick up your forms or call the office to have them mailed to you. Forms that have not been completed will be mailed out in October. Water Use Forms will be due December 4.

Producers in the groundwater allocation area of Union Township in Gosper County will still receive Water Use Reports and are required to complete them. Tri-Basin NRD staff will be verifying reported flowmeter information from the allocated area.

Nitrogen Management Crop Reports Due

Nitrogen Management Reports for the 2009 crop year will be due December 31, 2009 for producers in Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Tri-Basin Groundwater Quality Management Area. The reports need to have correct ID numbers (either well registration number or CNPPID ID number for each legal), as well as the results of water and soil samples taken before the 2009 crop was planted. (Soil and water sample results from 2008 are reported on this year's form. The samples taken this year will be reported on the 2010 form.) If you have fields in the Phase 2 or Phase 3 areas, you should receive a list of fields that require Nitrogen Management Crop Reports in the mail. If you need reporting forms, please contact Esther at the Tri-Basin NRD office.

Also, remember to take your soil samples this fall or in early spring for your 2010 crop reports.



Tim Vogt gave Tri-Basin NRD staff, directors and guests a tour of KAAPA Ethanol Plant during TBNRD's annual tour of district projects.

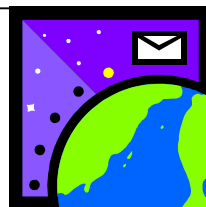
2009 Board of Directors Tour

Tri-Basin NRD staff and directors toured Phelps and Kearney Counties on August 11. Tour stops included a CNPPID drip irrigation system, the future site of the US Fish & Wildlife Service Headquarters at Funk Lagoon, KAAPA Ethanol Plant, and the Wyoming Property, a wildlife habitat owned by the Platte River Recovery Program. The tour concluded at Iain Nicholson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary for lunch. The regular August Board of Directors meeting was held there.

Did you know? Tri-Basin NRD provides nitrate and bacteria testing for rural household drinking water free of charge once a year. Call or stop by the Tri-Basin NRD office for more details.

Electronic Edition of Tri-Basin Topics Available

If you are interested in receiving a PDF version of Tri-Basin Topics newsletter via e-mail, please let us know. Simply send an email to nsalisbury@tribasinnrd.org requesting the electronic version and we'll take you off the mailing list and add you to the e-mail edition list.



ONLINE RESOURCES

http://dnrdata.dnr.ne.gov/wellssql/?&Dept. of Natural Resources Well Data
http://water.usgs.gov/ogwGround water information
http://www.cnppid.com/Elevation_Flows2.htmReservoir elevation/Platte River Flow
http://tribasinnrd.org/domesticwatertest.htmlDomestic Nitrate Testing
http://www.arborday.orgTree recommendations, identification
http://www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/Determining soil type
http://water.usgs.gov/cgi-bin/daily_flow?neCurrent water resource conditions for Nebraska

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(All meetings are at NRD office in Holdrege unless otherwise noted.)

October

October 6 Land Judging Contest
 October 12 Columbus Day (office closed)
 October 13 NRD Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m.*

November

November 10 NRD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.*
 November 11 Veteran's Day (office closed)
 November 26 & 27 Office closed for Thanksgiving

December

December 8 NRD Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m.*
 December 24 Christmas Eve (office closed at noon)
 December 25 Christmas (office closed)

* Times are tentative

WATER CONSERVATION TIP

A leaky faucet wastes as much as 2,700 gallons
 a year, if it doesn't drive you crazy first.
 So fix it already!



TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Todd Garrelts, Chairman Holdrege, NE
 David Nickel, Vice Chairman Kearney, NE
 Ed Harris, Treasurer Loomis, NE
 Larry Reynolds, Secretary Lexington, NE
 Brian Bergstrom Axtell, NE
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 Patty Abrahamson Assistant Office Clerk
 Ruth Nielsen Minden Office Secretary
 Lori Hagan Elwood Office Secretary
 Tami Reese Holdrege Office Secretary

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.

♦ Crop Reports & Water Use Due
 ♦ TBNRD Board Tour
 ♦ New TBNRD Office
IN THIS ISSUE

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Natural Resources District
1723 N Burlington Street
Holdrege, NE 68949



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 U.S. Postage
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