

# TRI-BASIN TOPICS

Summer 2004

Volume 18, Issue 2

**“Dedicated to the Conservation of our Natural Resources”**

## Irrigated Acre Certification

After September 15, 2004, no additional irrigated acres can be developed in the Republican Basin and in the Platte Basin west of Highway 183, unless an equal number of certified (existing) irrigated acres are converted to a non-irrigated land use. Tri-Basin NRD is in the process of certifying (counting) irrigated acres in the Republican Basin Watershed and the Platte Basin Watershed West of Highway 183 in Gosper, Phelps and Kearney Counties.

Integrated Management Rules intended to protect streams and rivers from depletion due to additional groundwater consumption will take effect September 15, 2004. Anyone with newly developed irrigated acres needs to contact our office before the September 15th deadline. This will ensure that these new acres can be certified as irrigated acres. For more information call Tri-Basin at 995-6688 or toll free at 1-877-995-6688.

### Neither Heat, Nor Wind, Nor Rain Halts the 2004 Water Jamboree



Students discover which filters clean water best.

Wednesday, April 28th was bright and sunny, while Thursday, April 29th was rainy and cold. However, the smiles on the kids' faces looked just the same each day. The students who attend Water Jamboree look forward to it all year. Water Jamboree provides out of the classroom hands-on experimenting and learning for all who attend. The more than 600 students from south central Nebraska and north central Kansas took back to their classrooms and homes new ideas about water, new memories, and new little trees to plant. 2004 was another successful year!



## Managers Message

By: John Thorburn

When I was a small boy in Norfolk in the late 1960's, Dutch Elm Blight swept through our town.

Around our house, we lost four big American Elms to the blight. The street that I lived on went from shady to sun-bleached in just a few years. This was a common scene in America during that period.

Until Dutch Elm Blight spread through the United States in the 1950s and '60s, American Elms seemed to be an ideal tree species. They are hardy native trees that are well adapted to a wide range of soils and climates. They have an attractive appearance with a "vase-shaped" growth habit. They grow relatively rapidly, yet they have strong limbs. They are excellent shade trees. For all these reasons, American Elms were the most popular and widely planted street and landscape trees in the U.S. during the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century. Their prevalence and prominence made their death and disappearance that much more noticeable.

Many landscapers and foresters learned a hard lesson from the destruction wrought by Dutch Elm Blight. The lesson is that we must plant a wider variety of trees to protect our landscapes from the next disease or pest that comes along, rather than reflexively relying on a handful of favorite species. Unfortunately, that lesson has not been ingrained as deeply in our collective memory as it should have been.

Dutch Elm Blight is still around and it claims a few of the scattered remnants of our once-vast American Elm population every year. Researchers have developed Blight resistant varieties of American Elm, but no cure has been found for this killer fungus. Now we find ourselves confronted with another devastating tree-killing pest. Its destruction will be widespread and many beautiful mature trees will be lost. This time the killer is not a fungus, it is a tiny nematode. The victims will be hundreds of thousands of Scotch Pine trees.

Scotch Pines have many favorable characteristics, such as rapid growth rate and adaptability to a wide range of soil types and climatic conditions. They also have a conical Christmas tree shape, which has contributed to their popularity as landscape and

windbreak trees.

Unfortunately, Scotch Pines are particularly vulnerable to an untreatable affliction called Pine Wilt syndrome. Pine Wilt occurs when pine sawyer beetles feed on Scotch Pines. The beetles do not kill trees by themselves. They feed on the tender bark of twigs and deposit pinewood nematodes into the open wounds. The microscopic nematodes work their way into resin canals, the "arteries" of a tree. Over a few months, the growing nematodes clog and eventually cut off circulation in the resin canals, rapidly killing the trees. Scotch Pine are particularly vulnerable to Pine Wilt if they have been damaged or stressed by drought. Bi-weekly, slow trickle watering will give them some protection by keeping them healthy.

Pine Wilt cannot be prevented or cured, but it can be controlled. If you have Scotch Pine trees that suddenly turn brown or show symptoms of dieback, you should contact your local NRD or UN-L Cooperative Extension office to find out how to test your trees for Pine Wilt. If Pine Wilt is diagnosed, the dying trees need to be immediately cut down. Then the wood must be burned, buried or chipped to prevent Pine Wilt from spreading. Do not cut up infected trees for firewood, because the wood can harbor the beetles and nematodes.

Pine Wilt is lethal to Scotch Pine, but native pines, such as Ponderosa, are resistant to pinewood nematodes. We will probably lose most of our Scotch Pines to Pine Wilt over the next few years, but they will not die in vain if we replace them with a wider variety of trees and shrubs.



## “Keep Nebraska Beautiful” Ideas

1. Secure trash container lids to prevent blowing litter.
2. Volunteer to help organize a recycling program where you work or at school.
3. Buy a reusable, cloth bag to use when shopping for groceries.
4. Compost yard waste, grass clippings and non-meat food waste.
5. Turn off the lights, television, stereo, etc., when they are not in use.
6. Store leftovers in reusable containers rather than using plastic wrap or aluminum foil.
7. Instead of using a clothes dryer, put a clothesline in the backyard to use in nice weather.
8. Use cloth napkins, towels, and sponges instead of disposable paper products.
9. Recycle used oil. Visit [www.knb.org](http://www.knb.org) for the Nebraska Used Oil Collection Program sites near you.
10. Use a washable mug instead of a styrofoam or paper cup.
11. Water your lawn early in the morning. This reduces evaporation and saves water!
12. Don't litter! Remember that litter includes cigarette butts, gum, and leftover unwanted food.
13. Purchase recycled products and products packaged using recycled materials.
14. Print and photocopy on both sides of the paper.
15. Plant drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees.



Dave Beins, USDA-NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, explains land surveying methods to students at Rainwater Basin Conservation Day

16. Wash and dry only full loads of laundry whenever possible.
17. Sweep your driveway and sidewalk. Don't use the hose or sweep into the street.
18. Buy only what you will need and use (paint, fertilizer, groceries, etc).
19. Instead of using hazardous chemicals to clean your house, use more environmentally-friendly products like baking soda, rubbing alcohol and vinegar.
20. Buy locally grown food items. Support your local farmer's market!

## Owners of Groundwater Wells

With the many concerns for our water it is imperative that we make sure that groundwater wells are registered correctly with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Lincoln. Whenever changes are made to a well or pump there are updates that need to be sent in along with changes in ownership and addresses. It is also important at this time to make sure that you have the correct acres registered.

If you are interested in seeing how your wells are registered, you can access that information on the

DNR website, <http://www.dnr.state.ne.us>. Once reaching this website, place your cursor on groundwater and then click on Registered GW wells data retrieval, which will take you to a screen with search options. You may also contact Tri-Basin NRD toll free at 1-877-995-6688 for help with checking information on your wells, or stop in at 1308 Second Street, Holdrege (east side of the Ag Center).

Outdated information on a well registration constitutes an illegal well, according to state statute.

### Check out these web sites:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov>

<http://dnrdata.dnr.state.ne.us/NeRAIN>

[http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/dnrnews/news2004/summer2004\\_sm.pdf](http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/dnrnews/news2004/summer2004_sm.pdf)

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/>

[http://net.unl.edu/swi/pers/water\\_worries.html](http://net.unl.edu/swi/pers/water_worries.html)

<http://www.h2ouse.org/>

-National Weather Service

-NE Rain and Hail Study

-LB 962

-Water Data for the Nation

-Nebraska Reservoirs

-Home Water Efficiency



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(All meetings are at NRD office in Phelps County Ag Center unless otherwise noted.)

## August

- August 10 - NRD Board Annual Tour at 8:00 a.m.\*
- August 12 - NRD Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m.\*

## September

- September 6 - Labor Day (office closed)
- September 14 - NRD Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

## October

- October 12 - NRD Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m.\*

\* Times are tentative

## WATER CONSERVATION TIP

- Don't overwater your lawn during the summer. As a general rule, it only needs to be watered every 57 days during this time.

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### TRI-BASIN NRD STAFF

John Thorburn ..... General Manager  
Richard Holloway ..... Assistant Manager  
Charles Brooks ..... Land Resources Coordinator  
Carie Lynch ..... Administrative Secretary  
Roger David ..... Conservation Technician  
Tammy Fahrenbruch ..... Inf. & Education Coordinator/Office Asst.  
Esther Smith ..... Office Clerk  
Shannon Helms ..... Inf. & Education Assistant  
Marlene Shearer ..... Minden Office Secretary  
Mary Stauffer ..... Elwood Office Secretary  
Patty Abrahamson ..... 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.

### TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*Natural Resources District*



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