



Summer 2022

Volume 36, Issue 3

# Tri-Basin Topics

A quarterly publication of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District

# 50th Anniversary Open House

July 15th, 2022, 9:30 - 10:30 AM

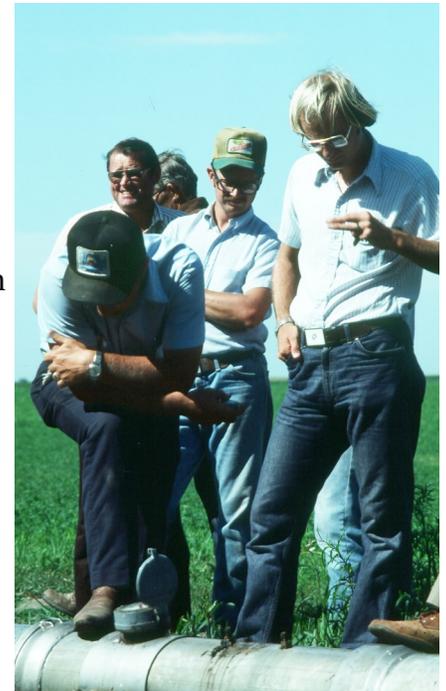
Our celebration will begin with a proclamation from Mayor Doug Young, of Holdrege at 9:30 a.m. at the Tri-Basin office at 1723 Burlington St in Holdrege.

**Please join us** for refreshments and several demonstrations with opportunities to see some things we do. We will have several **door prizes** so be sure to put your name in.

**Sign up** for free domestic well water testing. You will get to see a drone demo, as well as educational tools like water rockets and stream table.

**Come** to see how we are working to educate and support citizens in protecting the district's precious natural resources.

Other celebrations are happening across the state as Nebraska's NRD system celebrates 50 years of protecting our soil and water resources. A proclamation by Governor Ricketts will designate July 11-15 as NRD Week in honor of the 50th anniversary.



Tri-Basin NRD Flash-Back Photos  
Lower Left—1970's Tree Planting  
Lower Right—1980's Irrigation Efficiency Demonstration



## NEBRASKA'S NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICTS

PROTECTING LIVES. PROTECTING PROPERTY. PROTECTING THE FUTURE.

*"Dedicated to Conservation of our Natural Resources"*

<http://www.tribasinnrd.org>



# Manager's Message

by John Thorburn

This past spring was memorable, but not in a good way. Drought started the previous fall and persisted through the winter and into spring. High winds blasted the region for weeks, drying vegetation to a crisp. Southwest Nebraska was literally a tinderbox. Fires raged through Gosper County and into Furnas County on Thursday, April 7th, devastating the area. High winds and dry conditions caused the fire to move rapidly and made it extremely difficult to control. The fire chief from Elwood lost his life and others were injured. Spot fires persisted for several days. Property and livestock were lost. The western portion of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (NRD) has a long road to recover from the losses they have suffered.

Staff from Tri-Basin NRD went out shortly after the fire to survey the damage with Elwood NRCS. They tried to identify the boundaries of the fire damaged area, to get some sense of the extent of the fire damage, and to look for ways the NRD could help our constituents with disaster recovery.

The Tri-Basin NRD Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve relief measures. Landowners in Union Township, where producers are allocated water, will be allowed to pump water as needed, without allocation in 2022 for fire suppression, dust control or to establish cover crops.

In addition, flowmeters in Union Township that were damaged by fire will be replaced by Tri-Basin NRD. Union Township producers should begin by applying



for cost-share. Producers in the rest of Gosper County who lost meters in the fire will be eligible for cost-share to replace their meters.

Another area where the NRD can help is replacing fire-damaged windbreaks. Many windbreaks will need to be partially or completely replaced. Tri-Basin NRD has a windbreak renovation cost-share program. Our program pays 50% of replacement costs, up to \$5000. That is helpful, but we are also seeking additional funds to help pay for this important but expensive work.

A longer-term challenge in fire-damaged areas will be erosion control. We had some good rains in Gosper County in May, which gave pasture grasses a boost, but fire-damaged vegetation is still tender and stressed. Pastures will benefit from having an opportunity to rest and recover. USDA-NRCS has programs that will compensate landowners for deferring grazing. Tri-Basin and NRCS both offer cost-share for a variety of erosion control measures. Please contact the NRD office or your local USDA-NRCS office to get more information or to sign up for these services. Be sure to sign up before you commence your work.

Tri-Basin NRD will continue to do what we can to support our disaster-affected constituents. Let us know if you have ideas about how we can help you. Nebraska's NRDs are here to protect lives, protect property, and protect the future by preserving our natural resources.



Lower Left—Combine burned up in the fires.  
Upper Right—Fire burned through pasture.

# Tri-Basin NRD Summer Intern

Tri-Basin NRD has hired an intern to work out of the district office this summer: Karlie Rumbeck.

Karlie will graduate from the University of Wyoming in December 2022 with a degree in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management with minors in Soil



*Above on the right, 2022 Summer Intern Karlie Rumbeck.  
Below on the left, Whitney Gappa, Water Technician*

Science and Agriculture Business. She is a member of several organizations at the university including, Mortar Board, Order of Omega, Rho Lambda, Range Club Historian, 2021 Meat Judging Team, 2022 Meat Animal Evaluation Team, Sigma Alpha-A Alpha Epsilon Chapter. She is a Amherst High School graduate and is a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Amherst. She enjoys photography and tractor/pickup pulling with her family.

Tri-Basin NRD has been employing interns during the summer for 23 years. The district's internships give college students an opportunity to gain natural resources conservation experience. Interns collect and test groundwater quality samples, monitor wildlife habitat, test irrigation system efficiency, and help maintain drainage improvement project areas (IPAs). The interns also work with staff from Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Many of the district's former interns have pursued careers in agriculture and natural resources, taking jobs with agri-businesses, NRDs, NRCS and various state agencies. Dalton Refior, TBNRD's current Land Resources Technician, spent three summers working as a district intern.

## New Water Technician

Our newest employee at Tri-Basin NRD is Whitney Gappa. She is a Water Technician in charge of our Chemigation program. You may meet her this summer when she is out inspecting your chemigation injection site.

Whitney graduated from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln in 2021, majoring in Fisheries Ecology and Management. She was raised near Loup City where she graduated High School and attends the St Francis Catholic Church and volunteers with the Friends of Paplin, Inc.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her dog, Rose. She likes to fish and hunt. She has fun going out with friends to movies, playing board games, pool, and darts.





**Tri-Basin Natural Resources District**  
 1723 Burlington St. Holdrege, NE 68949  
 (308) 995-6688  
 email: [tribasin@tribasinrd.org](mailto:tribasin@tribasinrd.org)  
[www.tribasinrd.org](http://www.tribasinrd.org)

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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

# Calendar

July 4 ..... NRD Closed for Independence Day  
 July 12 ..... NRD Board meeting, 1:30 p.m.\*  
 July 15 ..... 50th Anniversary Open House  
 August 9 ..... NRD Board tour and meeting, 1:30 p.m.\*  
 \*Location to be determined  
 September 5 ..... NRD Closed for Labor Day  
 September 13 ..... NRD Board meeting, 7:30 p.m.\*  
 September 22 ..... Rainwater Basin Conservation Day  
 October 10 ..... NRD Closed for Columbus Day  
 October 11 ..... NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.\*

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

**TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

**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.

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