

*The RC&D Council and staff offer basic support to conserve and develop natural, human and financial resources*

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

*Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development Council Inc.*

RC&D projects are by nature “results oriented” and since 1993 the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council has been a valued “go-to” resource to get things done. The organization serves the 6-county region of Antelope, Cedar, Dixon, Knox, Pierce and Wayne counties.

*Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development Council Inc.*

*Project Results of 2017:*

- Properly disposed of 2.9 tons of household hazardous waste plus 41 florescent light bulbs
- Recycled 4.5 tons of obsolete electronics
- Provided 45 radon test kits to citizens
- Educated 671 adults and students on environmental issues
- Brought history to life for 182 citizens during tours and museum visits
- Assisted 252 citizens by having easy access to locally-produced food
- Supported 24 entrepreneurs in their efforts to show and sell locally produced items

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*Since 2000 the RC&D Council has been doing recycling projects. From used oil to prescription drugs, obsolete computers to household hazardous waste these efforts have kept over 934 tons of material out of the landfill while serving 12,593 households and businesses.*

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*President's  
Comments*

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Jim Rabe, RC&D Council President has this to say about the year:

“I’m especially glad that the RC&D can continue to offer recycling projects for obsolete electronics and household hazardous waste that citizens keep requesting.

I feel that by serving on the board, participating in all the meetings, and helping with projects that I’m doing my best to bring needed services to the citizens of the RC&D service area. “



Jim Rabe, left, has served as President of the RC&D Council since 2015

## *PLAINVIEW FARMERS MARKET*

Teresa Liermann served as the Manager for the 2017 Plainview Farmer's Market.



It was held in the RC&D parking lot on Wednesdays and ran from June 7<sup>th</sup> through October 11<sup>th</sup>. There were 12 vendors throughout the season who reached a minimum of 252 citizens. Many were regulars and others were passersby traveling U.S. Highway 20. All had access to locally-produced vegetables, baked goods, jellies, jams, native wildflower bouquets and more.

This was the 4<sup>th</sup> year for this market in this location. It was promoted through classified advertisements in the Plainview News, posters placed in Casey's, at Family Dollar, and at the Midwest Bank, along with regular posts to the RC&D Facebook and Twitter pages. It is estimated that vendor sales were approximately \$10,000 over the season.

## *HERITAGE & HISTORY TOUR OF KNOX COUNTY*

The tour was held Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> with thirty-eight passengers aboard the motor coach. The tour included several rural churches, an Amish school, Old Jules cabin, Pischelville Hall and other sites of interest.

Funding came from the Knox County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Casey's General Store, and Norfolk Area Home Realty. The project was also an official Signature Event of the 2017 Sesquicentennial



Positive feedback in participant evaluations encouraged the RC&D to continue these tours in the future as a way to bring the history of the region to life.

## *HUB & SPOKE RECYCLING*



Laurel Regional Recycling received a Nebraska Environmental Trust grant of \$126,606 to institute a Hub & Spoke recycling effort in Northeast Nebraska. This is in partnership with the communities of Verdigre, Creighton, Plainview, Niobrara,



Bloomfield, Winnetoon, Orchard, Brunswick, and the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council. The project is estimated to keep 1301 tons of material out of the landfill over a one-year period which will be a cost savings to the participating communities.

Laurel Regional Recycling will serve as the processing “hub” with Verdigre, Creighton and Plainview becoming “mini-hubs”. The other five communities will be the “spokes”. Funds are being used to fabricate forty galvanized rolling carts and purchase a used tractor and semi-trailer. Empty carts will be delivered to the “mini-hubs” for the collection of recyclables and then, as scheduled, Laurel Regional Recycling will pick up the full carts and drop off empty ones. Two educational events were held in each town to inform citizens of what to do, why to do it, and how they’re benefitting not only the environment, but their communities in this recycling process.



The proposed timeline for the project was overzealous, but the carts are almost ready to go, the semitrailer and tractor have been purchased. Citizens are anxiously waiting for recycling to begin or expand in their communities.

## *PASSPORT TO HERITAGE 2017*

As a way to promote area museums, the Heritage Museum Network continued their *Passport to Heritage* program. Participating museums handed out passport sheets and gave stickers for their listing when people visited their museum. Anyone who visited all the museums was entered into a prize drawing. Each of the eleven participating museums paid a small fee to help purchase FaceBook advertising and posters. The program ran Memorial Day through Labor Day.



All museums reported giving out more passport booklets than in 2016. Nine passports were turned in for the prize drawing. Winners were: 1<sup>st</sup> prize Cindy Howey of Hartington, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize Lois Moser of Plainview and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize Angela Blatter of Wakefield.

## *HERITAGE MUSEUM NETWORK*

This project was reinvigorated in September of 2014 to reconnect the small museums in the region. Often these “all volunteer” groups feel somewhat alone in their efforts so getting together to talk about the issues facing small museums is helpful. They’ve been able to share history, compare notes on things that work and

things that don't work, and meet new people with like interests, The RC&D Council's role is to support them by sending out meeting notices, preparing grant applications as needed, and helping with specific project needs.

The group held their spring meeting at the Cedar County Museum in Hartington and while there enjoyed a tour of their facility. The fall meeting was held in Verdigre where the group visited the Heritage Museum and the Commercial Hotel which is on the historic register.

In honor of Nebraska's 150<sup>th</sup> and in an effort to enhance awareness of area museums, the Northeast Nebraska RC&D featured a special museum display during the summer.

Plainview Historical Museum showed off their unique historical items in May. During the month of June Creighton Historical Center was featured and in July the Pierce Historical Society Museum had a table of interesting things of particular significance to their county.



## *RC&D ENDOWMENT*

In 2005 it was the feeling of the RC&D Board of Directors that nationally federal dollars for the RC&D Program were in jeopardy. To continue the work of the Council, if not now but in the future, there was a need to become sustainable and that creating an endowment might be a big help.

In 2006 an agreement was developed with the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) to do just that. In September of 2007 the new endowment fund was named in memory of Bob Porter, Past Council President. It was his vision to have funds available to help sustain this RC&D area into the future. He also saw it as an opportunity to have money available to fund smaller projects that often have to wait until a grant is found. At that time the Council's savings account of \$15,179.82 was deposited with NCF.



The principal remains with NCF, but the interest is available for use by the Council as they see fit. Currently there is a balance of \$27,226.51 with \$1,776.83 available for payout. Most people will leave quite a bit for their children, but what will they leave for their community? The Northeast Nebraska RC&D is uniquely positioned to help communities in the 6-county area they serve.

## *PRAIRIE CHICKENS & PRAIRIE STREAMS*

The prairie chickens were in fine form early on Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> for the Prairie Chickens & Prairie Streams Tour. Forty people traveled to the site prior to sunrise so that they were settled into the blinds before the birds began the annual mating ritual. There were about twenty prairie chickens out and about that morning which is good amount for one lek.



Participants learned that there's more to a prairie stream than meets the eye. Game & Parks staff used an electro-shock device to stun some top minnows, a little sunfish, water scorpion, a leach, and more. This stream, rich in nutrients, is somewhat impaired and falls within the boundary of the Bazile Creek Watershed Initiative.

Breakfast and informational speakers followed back at the Verdigre Methodist Church.

Evaluations were very positive and more wildlife viewing adventures will surely be planned for 2018. Partners were Nebraska Game & Parks, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, Northern Prairie Lands Trust, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nebraska Natural Legacy Project and the RC&D.

## *NEBRASKA SESQUICENTENNIAL STORYTELLING CONFERENCE*

One hundred and fifty years of storytelling in Nebraska was the theme of this event whose focus was to share Nebraska history through literature. It was held August 6<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> at Ponca State Park and featured presentations by fifteen Nebraska poets and authors. It was a Signature Event helping to celebrate Nebraska's Statehood of 1867 through 2017. About 60 people attended.



Brad Kellogg, Northeast Nebraska RC&D's representative on the project's advisory board, was also one of the speakers. He portrayed 1870's Dixon County Sheriff Mason Dewitt. Besides being a sponsor of the event, the RC&D board also had three of their own there as local authors signing and selling their books: Lin Brummels, A. J. McClanahan and Dick Haskin.

## *WMA - Yellow Flag Iris Detection & Control on Elkhorn River Drainages*

The Northeast Nebraska Weed Management Area (WMA), a project of the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development Council, was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. The project dealt with the early detection and control of noxious and invasive weeds, especially Yellow Flag Iris, along the Elkhorn River drainage in Holt and Antelope Counties.



The Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District also pledged \$5,000 in matching funds. They wanted to assist in this way because noxious and invasive weeds can clog waterways, utilize nutrients and water that other plants need, reduce property values if not managed properly, and are detrimental to the natural resources.

The Antelope and Holt County Weed Superintendents led the project. Letters were sent out in February to all affected landowners in the project area. The letter told of the project, the activities, and requested that they indicate their desire to participate, or not. Of the twenty-eight (28) landowners receiving letters in Holt County only twelve (12) were returned, but over forty (40) replies were received by Antelope County with most wanting to participate.



Schindler Flying Inc. scouted for the Yellow Flag Iris using a commercial helicopter. None were found in Holt County, but there were many locations noted in Antelope County. Due to a scheduling conflict the identified plants were not sprayed as initially planned so plans are being made to do that in 2018.

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission led an alternative “stomping” treatment on an experimental plot at Hackberry Wildlife Management Area in Antelope County. The results of that have not yet been evaluated.

Grant funding came from monies provided through LB1038, the 2016 Riparian Vegetation Management Grant program. The goals of this program are to provide funds to weed management programs in Nebraska, promote collaborative efforts to survey and manage noxious and invasive weeds, support innovative integrated approaches to weed management, and to build public awareness of the adverse impacts of noxious weeds and invasive plants and the need for proactive control.

## *ELECTRONIC WASTE & HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE*

Four electronic waste (Ewaste) recycling events along with Household Hazardous Waste collections were held in September. Citizens were very pleased to have these services offered again and requests for additional collections continue to be received.

Results included:

- 2.9 ton of hazardous material was properly disposed of
- 4.5 ton of electronic waste was properly recycled
- One hundred fifteen (115) households were served
- Citizens came from twenty-four (24) communities in the region
- Sixteen (16) volunteers provided fifty-five (55) hours to help with the events by unloading items, dumping paint, surveying citizens, and more



Leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients are considered to be household hazardous waste (HHW). Items brought in included 675# of pesticide, 5030# of paint, 46# of acids, 22 gallons of used oil, 9 gallons of antifreeze, 13 gallons of 2-4D, 2 gallons of Roundup, 41 florescent light bulbs, and 180# of recyclables. Red Willow County Household Hazardous Waste of McCook was the contractor.



Nebraska Electronics Recycling & Disposal of Norfolk was selected as the contractor for the electronic waste recycling. Households were able to properly dispose of a large variety of electronic items including computers, TVs, printers, batteries, and more. Seventy-nine (79) TVs were collected.

These events are held annually if possible and the RC&D Council moves them around the six-county service area in an effort to reach out to all citizens.

Thanks to the host communities and citizens who helped with the cash match required for the Nebraska Environmental Trust grant.





## Financial Statement 2017

1/1/2017 to 12/31/2017

<u>Income</u>	
Memberships/Donations	\$19,457
Projects & Grants	\$30,179
Fees for Service & Interest Income	\$104
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$49,740</b>
<u>Expenses</u>	
Donations & Memberships	\$1,183
Projects & Grants	\$25,503
Rent & Utilities	\$3,433
Payroll Expense	\$16,975
Professional Fees & Insurance	\$2,789
Travel & Registration	\$22
Office Expense	\$3,089
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$52,994</b>
<b>Net Loss</b>	<b>(\$3,254)</b>
<u>Account Balances 12/31/17</u>	
Checking Account	\$54,902.93
Certificates of Deposit	
RC&D	\$20,152.05
Endowment	\$27,226.51

## Awards & Special Thanks

- Financial Management Assistance: Presented to Dick Haskin for outstanding financial management assistance to the RC&D in 2017
- Award Certificate: Presented to Gary Howey for financial support, project assistance, and service to the RC&D Board of Directors since 1997
- World's Best RC&D Partner Award: Presented to Jim & Laurie Meuret for supporting the RC&D Council with virtually free rent from 2011 through 2017
- Farmers Market Award: Presented to Pearl & Jim Laycock for starting the Plainview Market & supporting it since 2014
- Certificate of Award: Presented to Leonard Janovec for leadership & recruitment supporting RC&D history tours
- Leadership Award: -Presented to Teresa Liermann for the Plainview Farmers Market 2017
- Certificate of Award: Presented to Jim Rabe for his leadership to the RC&D Council 2017 (and perfect attendance too)!
- "Been There Donut That": Presented to Dick Haskin
- "Been There Done That": Presented to Jan Jorgensen

## *Board of Directors*

County, Tribal and Natural Resource Districts provide representatives as board members for the RC&D Council. Vacancies do exist so contact a board member or call the office if interested in serving. New people and new ideas are always welcome.

Current board members are:

Antelope County – Alexandra McClanahan, Orchard

Cedar County – Glen Anderson, Coleridge; Maurice Ketter, Wynot

Dixon County – Brad Kellogg, Wakefield; Bruce Kneifl & Rhonda Kneifl, Newcastle

Knox County – Janet Gill, Bloomfield; Leonard, Janovec, Norfolk; Chris Kreycik, Niobrara

Pierce County – Joan Alexander, Plainview; Judy Rasmussen, Plainview; Dennis Wacker, Osmond

Wayne County – Lin Brummels, Winside; Georgia Janssen, Winside; Jim Rabe, Winside

Natural Resource Districts – Gary Howey, Hartington, Lewis & Clark NRD; Bob Huntley, Norfolk, Lower Elkhorn NRD; Kent Pavlik, Verdigre, Lower Niobrara NRD

Native American Tribes – Larry Wright Sr., Ponca Tribe of Nebraska; Mike Crosley, Santee Sioux Nation

Officers who have been serving the Council in 2017 are: Dennis Wacker, Osmond, Vice-President; Joan Alexander, Plainview, Secretary; Janet Gill, Bloomfield, Treasurer; Jim Rabe, Winside, President



Have a project idea? Contact RC&D via any of the methods shown below or visit with a board member listed above. Office hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday each week and the answering machine is always on!

**Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development Council Inc.**

**702 E Park Ave., Plainview, NE 68769-4022**

**(402) 582-4866 FAX (402) 582-3966**

**Email – [northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net](mailto:northeastrcd@plvwtelco.net)**

**[www.nenercd.org](http://www.nenercd.org)**

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