

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

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

*Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation &  
Development Council Inc.*

RC&D projects are by nature “results oriented” and for twenty-five years the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council has been a resource for getting 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 2018:*

- Properly disposed of 6 tons of household hazardous waste
- Provided 54 radon test kits to citizens
- Educated 252 adults and students on environmental issues
- Brought history to life for 65 citizens during tours and museum visits
- Assisted 300 citizens by having easy access to locally-produced food

*President's Comments*



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 household hazardous waste since citizens keep requesting that service.

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

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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 940 tons of material out of the landfill while serving 12,768 households and businesses.*

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## **PLAINVIEW FARMERS MARKET**



The RC&D parking lot was again the host site for the Wednesday Farmer's Market that ran from June 6<sup>th</sup> through October 24<sup>th</sup>. There were 12 vendors throughout the season who reached a minimum of 300 citizens. Many were regulars and others were passersby traveling U.S. Highway 20. A variety of items were offered including fresh produce, farm fresh eggs, local honey, baked goods, jellies & jams, Amish baskets & rugs, as well as a variety of crafts, live entertainment, and more. This year, the market also featured a children's activity table.

This was the 5<sup>th</sup> year for this market in this location. It was promoted through classified advertisements in several local newspapers, posters placed in busy local businesses along U.S. Highway 20 and with regular posts to the RC&D Facebook, Twitter page, and local community exchanges. It is estimated that vendor sales were approximately \$12,000 over the season.

## **CEDAR COUNTY CHURCHES & CEMETERIES TOUR**

On October 18<sup>th</sup> thirty people enjoyed visiting the impressive churches in Menominee, St. Helena, and Bow Valley. They heard historic presentations at Immaculate Conception Cemetery, St. Helena Cemetery, and Wynot Cemetery. Guides Brad Kellogg and Mary Rose Pinkelman have both spent years researching the history of the area so they were well-versed on stories of the communities, churches, and grave sites that were visited. The group finished their day with wine-tasting at Nissen Winery accompanied by stories of the outlaws that once roamed the hills of Cedar County.



Funding was provided in part by Cedar County Convention & Tourism Board.

## **HUB & SPOKE RECYCLING**



Laurel Regional Recycling expanded their facility to include more communities through the Hub & Spoke recycling effort in Northeast Nebraska. This is in partnership with the communities of Verdigre, Creighton,



Plainview, Niobrara, Bloomfield, Winnetoon, Brunswick, and the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council.

The project started gathering recyclables from the mini-hubs in February which was a much later start than originally planned. A request was made to the Environmental Trust for a one-year extension which was granted.

It's been a little trying in some aspects, but rewarding in most. Small things need to be addressed and are being dealt with incrementally as recycling for many is new and the mini-hubs are getting better with material identification in regards to "at the source" sorting. More communities, Crofton, Osmond, and Hadar are interested in joining the program.

There's been a large increase in cardboard tonnage so the current equipment (baler) is not adequate to handle it and a larger one must be implemented into the program somehow. Two additional tractor trailers for hauling were purchased, but fuel has become quite an item due to the many trips being made to the mini-hubs as recycling picks up in the communities. The wheels on the rolling recycling carts have not been holding up and at least a dozen of them have had to be replaced.

### **PASSPORT TO HERITAGE 2018**

Continued promotion of area museums through the Heritage Museum Network was supported with the *Passport to Heritage* program. Each of the eleven participating museums sought sponsors to buy ads in the Passport which helped to pay for the printing and advertising. The program ran Memorial Day through Labor Day.



Participation was lower this year, but the program did keep the awareness level up about the museums and it brought more people through their doors.

The Network continues to meet twice a year as a way to "stay connected". The RC&D Council helps by sending out meeting notices, take meeting notes, and assisting with specific project needs.

### **SHARP TAILS & SADDLE TALES TOUR**



Although it was a very cold morning, the sharp-tailed grouse did not disappoint their visitors on Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> southwest of Naper, Nebraska. The Sharp Tails and Saddle Tales Tour began at 5:45 a.m. at the Naper Café with twenty participants plus guides. Everyone was in place before the birds began their annual mating ritual. The photography blind was popular, but Myers school bus also served as a great blind and both provided front row seats for the birds' performance.

Breakfast followed back at the café and speakers covered conservation cost-share programs for Nebraska farmers and ranchers. The group then enjoyed visiting the Whitehorse Ranch Museum.

Evaluations were very positive. Partners were North Central Nebraska RC&D, Nebraska Game & Parks, Northern Prairie Lands Trust, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nebraska Natural Legacy Project, NRCS, and the Northeast Nebraska RC&D.

## **WMA - Early Detection and Integrated Management of Invasive Plants**

The Northeast Nebraska Weed Management Area (WMA), received a Nebraska Environmental Trust for \$49,280. Targeted plants for the biological control component of this project include Purple loosestrife, Leafy spurge, and Spotted knapweed. Appropriate insects will be acquired for each of these and releases will be made in a variety of locations within the NNWMA. “Hard-to-get-to” sites along the Niobrara River in Holt and Boyd counties will require the use of a rented airboat for release and distribution of biological control insects. Each release will be marked using GPS coordinates. Additionally, control of Yellow flag Iris, Salt cedar, and non-native Phragmites will also be part of the project. Protecting the Elkhorn River and its tributaries from plants that may inhibit flows, impact native vegetation and/or native wildlife is a component of this endeavor. Invasive species, particularly Yellow flag iris (YFI) in this case, have the potential to negatively impact biologically unique landscapes by competing with or reducing native vegetation, invading areas not typically vegetated, and reducing water flows in small channels. The Elkhorn River in Antelope County is the focus of this portion of the project. NNWMA will use an aerial survey done in May of 2017 to determine where to chemically treat YFI.



## **Household Hazardous Waste**

The Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council in partnership with North Central RC&D, Wayne Green Team and the cities of Atkinson, O’Neill, and Wayne held household hazardous waste events in April with great results. Six ton of material was properly disposed of or recycled. One hundred and seventy-five households were served and they came from twenty-five communities around the region.



People had saved up “stuff” for a long time in anticipation of an event like this one. Amounts collected include: 2820 pounds of pesticide, 7780 pounds of paint, 165 gallons of used oil, 75 gallons of antifreeze, 280 car batteries, and 510 florescent light bulbs. Besides all of that there were 1060 pounds of items that were recycled.



This project is funded in part by a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and with financial support from hosting communities.

## *Feeder Watch*



Kids, families, and bird lovers of all ages and experience levels were encouraged to attend Project Feeder Watch. This free event was held at the Plainview Public Library. The fun and informative presentation on how to use and collect Feeder Watch data was done by Jamie Bachmann, Wildlife Education Assistant with Nebraska Game & Parks and Northern Prairie Lands Trust. Participants learned how to identify and count backyard feeder birds and received materials so they could continue Project Feeder Watch in their own backyard. Door prizes, treats and more were provided.

Project Feeder Watch is a citizen science project out of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Citizen science is a way for the public to contribute to the scientific understanding of the natural world.

The bird feeding station has remained at the library so patrons can continue to learn about the birds that are in the region.

## *Grant Writing Workshop IV*

A Grant Writing Workshop was held in Plainview at the Public Library on February 23, 2018. Goals of the event were to share information with organizations, communities, and professionals on the availability of grants, who to contact, how to present projects to potential funders and the basics of writing grants. Janet Gill, RC&D Board member, led the session.



Laura Dendinger, Professor of Business at Wayne State College, was the main speaker for the day. Joan Scheel also spoke to the group via live video feed. Laura reviewed grant proposals that the fourteen participants had been writing. They had varied backgrounds from economic development groups, villages and cities, schools, a library, to a Natural Resource District.

## *Bee-friending Workshop*



A “Bee-friending” event was held at Prairies’ Edge Organic Farm near Plainview on August 7<sup>th</sup> with eighteen present. It was a beautiful day to be out in nature learning about bees. North America’s pollinator population has been on the decline for a number of years.

Hank Scott of Norfolk, an experienced beekeeper led the workshop with assistance from the RC&D’s own novice beekeeper Denny Wacker. Valuable

information was provided for those already involved in beekeeping and others who'd been thinking about starting that endeavor. One young "potential beekeeper" was able to get some hands-on experience with the bees.

## ***Financial Statement 2018***

1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018

<u>Income</u>	
Memberships/Donations	\$15,453.30
Projects & Grants	\$67,528.47
Fees for Service & Interest Income	\$102.56
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$83,084.33</b>
<u>Expenses</u>	
Donations & Memberships	\$915.00
Projects & Grants	\$60,114.46
Rent & Utilities	\$5,549.16
Payroll Expense	\$18,064.23
Professional Fees & Insurance	\$2,552.80
Travel & Registration	\$698.00
Office Expense	\$3,583.85
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$91,477.50</b>
<b>Net Loss</b>	<b>(\$8,393.17)</b>
<u>Account Balances 12/31/18</u>	
Checking Account	\$46,516.76
Certificates of Deposit	
RC&D	\$20,329.16
Endowment	\$27,551.14

## ***Awards & Special Thanks***

During the Annual Meeting held Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at Serendipity Restaurant the following awards were presented:

- Outstanding Council Member – Judy Rasmussen
  - For her efforts as Council Secretary, Farmers Market Assistant, Active Participant in many projects, and so much more
- Special Effort Award – Iris Dutton
  - For extra effort in planning & hosting the Northeast Nebraska RC&D's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, a job well done



- Farmers Market Award – Mark Newman
  - For providing wonderful live music at the 2018 Wednesday Markets
- Service Award – Janet Gill
  - For service to the RC&D Board of Directors since 2005
- Willing Substitute Award – Donna Christiansen
  - For her help at the RC&D office February - April 2018



## ***Board of Directors***

County, Tribal and Natural Resource Districts provide representatives as board members to 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; John Shively, Orchard; Ron Marshall, Neligh

Cedar County – Maurice Ketter, Wynot; Craig Bartels, Belden; Bob Steffen, Hartington

Dixon County – Iris Dutton, Ponca

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

Pierce County – Justin D. Doerr, 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; Ted Hughes, Neligh, Upper Elkhorn NRD

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

Officers who have been serving the Council in 2018 are: Jim Rabe, Winside, President; Dennis Wacker, Osmond, Vice- President; Judy Rasmussen, Plainview, Secretary; Janet Gill, Bloomfield, Treasurer

Staff members have been Jan Jorgensen, Projects Manager and Dick Haskin, Financial Manager. Jan is retiring as of December 31<sup>st</sup> after 25+ years. She said “It’s been a wonderful opportunity to work with this RC&D Council and to assist the people of this region with projects important to them. I’ve learned so much and feel blessed to have gotten to know so many wonderful people during my time with RC&D.” Taking over as Executive Director will be Jocelyn Osborne. She comes from South Sioux City originally and is glad to be returning to the area.

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.**

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