A Letter from the President

Your Northeast Nebraska RC&D has completed another year of what it does best. We assisted our six-county area by resourcing conservation, conserving resources, developing conservation, resourcing development, developing resources and conserving development. Whew!

A few years back when I first was introduced to the RC&D organization, my question to Jan was “What does RC&D stand for? She told me “Whatever you want it to stand for.” Resource Conservation & Development means different things to different people. Local needs addressed and projects undertaken are chosen by the people who are affected by them. We are a self-help organization.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year’s activities. As we work together we can make our corner of the world a better place to be.

Dennis G. Wacker, Northeast Nebraska RC&D Council President

Board Members

Antelope County
- Sandy Patton, Brunswick
- Susan Fields, Tilden
- Jerry Fields, Tilden

Cedar County
- Maurice Ketter, Wynot
- Glen Anderson, Coleridge
- Gary Stapelman, Laurel

Dixon County
- Jane Armstrong, Ponca
- Rhonda Kneifl, Newcastle
- Bruce Kneifl, Newcastle

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

Pierce County
- Dennis Wacker, Osmond
- Judy Rasmussen, Plainview

Wayne County
- James Rabe, Winside
- Georgia Janssen, Winside
- Lin Brummels, Winside

Lewis & Clark NRD
- Gary Howey, Hartington

Lower Elkhorn NRD
- Bob Huntley, Norfolk

Lower Niobrara NRD
- Brad Mahon, Niobrara

Upper Elkhorn NRD
- Bud Knuth, Royal

Santee Sioux Nation
- Mike Crosley, Niobrara

Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
- Larry Wright Sr., Niobrara

Office Staff
- Jan Jorgensen, Project Manager
- Dick Haskin, Financial Manager

President Dennis G. Wacker has served the Council for six years as a Pierce County representative, 3 of them in the capacity as president. During that time he’s become an organic farmer.
Connecting people to resources.

Table of Contents
- Backyard Medicine Chest ……p.2
- Northeast NE Geology Tour …p.2
- Dixon-Wayne Cemetery Tour …p.3
- 20th Anniversary Celebration …p.3
- Habitat Tour & Pleasent Dinner …p.4
- Bee Friendly Field Tour ………p.4
- DIY Christmas ……p.5
- Special Thanks ………p.5
- Awards & Special Recognitions ……p.6
- Financial Report …………………p.6

The “rest of the story”
Current projects not featured in this report:
- Northeast Nebraska Weed Management Area
- Aronia Berries
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events
- Electronics Recycling
- Wine Making at Home & Stained Glass Creation
- Dinner & A Movie

Backyard Medicine Chest Workshop

Rachel Liester, of Red Road Herbs in Stanton, presented a workshop on November 7th on herbal learning called “Backyard Medicine Chest.” This class highlighted the history and folklore of thirteen easy-to-grow and wild herbs. Twenty-four participants learned how to grow them, what parts to use, when and how to harvest, and how to store them. Rachel shared simple home remedies such as tinctures, teas, and oils that are designed to keep you and your family healthy.

Northeast Nebraska Geology Tour

At the RC&D Association Meeting in 2012 tours of the Wau-Col Regional Water System and Ponca State Park were highlighted and also turned out to be a perfect fit for the Nebraska Well Drillers Association (NWDWA) tour. Annually they host an educational tour for their members and others who are in need of continuing education hours.

Partnering with the NWDA was a new venture for the RC&D Council, but one that proved to be well worth it. The RC&D helped line up some of the speakers, handled local logistics, and shared information with area community water operators. The NWDA took care of registration, bringing in additional speakers, and making arrangements for continuing education credits.

Others who shared in making this one-day event a success were the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resource District (NRD), Lewis & Clark NRD, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, JEO Engineering Group, Nebraska Great Plains RC&D, UNL Conservation & Survey Division, Nebraska Health & Human Services, and the Village of Belden.

Dixon-Wayne Cemetery Tour

The Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council, in cooperation with the Dixon County Historical Society and the Wakefield Heritage Organization, hosted a Dixon-Wayne County Cemetery Tour on Saturday, September 28th. Step-on Guide, Brad Kellogg of Wakefield, is a well-known local historian and has spent years researching and documenting the cemeteries of Dixon and Wayne Counties.

On this tour, Kellogg told of each cemetery through engaging commentary, re-enactments, and even a surprise or two. The tour group heard stories of pioneers, tales of murder and mayhem, and even met a Civil War soldier and a lady-of-the-evening.

Partial funding for this tour was provided by grants from the Dixon County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) as well as the Wayne County CVB.

20th Anniversary Celebration

On September 22nd, at the Plainview High School Auditorium, the RC&D acknowledged 20 years of providing support and serving the needs and interests of the citizens in Antelope, Cedar, Dixon, Knox, Pierce, and Wayne counties. R.F. Smith, Nebraska’s Homegrown Humorist and Cowboy Poet, was the headliner for the afternoon event that drew approximately 90 people. Additional performances were given by Penny’s High Steppers, Fouette Dance Studio, and the Plainview Klown Band. Niobrara High School students presented their award-winning Purple loosestrife project, special recognitions were given out, and refreshments were provided.

This event was funded in part by a grant from the Pierce County Convention & Visitors Bureau.
Connecting people to resources.

Habitat Tour & Pheasant Dinner
The Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council in cooperation with Pheasants Forever and Nebraska Game & Parks Commission hosted a Habitat Management Tour on July 11th at George and Gretchen Hirschbach’s property near Hartington. Approximately forty-five people participated. The tour, led by biologist Cassidy Gerdes, took an up-close look at techniques used in managing grassland habitat for wildlife.

Bee Friendly Field Tour
Those attending the “Bee Friendly” Field Tour felt they received more good information than they thought possible at such an event. Denny Wacker, host and organic farmer, shared his story of becoming organic and how he had used available programs to help him establish lots of “edges” around his fields to increase diversity of pollinator species and offer additional advantage to crops. He has established 40 acres of wildflowers and grasses.

Wayne Ohnesorg swept the wildflower patch for insects that participants were interested in learning more about.

DIY Christmas
The “Do It Yourself (DIY) Christmas” program was held at the Plainview Community Building on November 20 with Delores Berckes of Verdigris. She is a very successful entrepreneur, humorist, and talented crafter. For over 20 years she has been designing her own fabric patterns, illustrating how-to craft books, and even done work on TV shows in California. Delores is the owner of Country Creations... & More in Verdigris.

During the evening Delores shared easy-to-make recipes that are perfect for the season. Pumpkin Fluff, Chai Tea, and Strawberry Cheesecake Salad probably showed up at many Thanksgiving meals this year! Following the “cooking school” time, she demonstrated projects that were ideal for gift giving or holiday decorating—gift jars using napkins and deco Coupe, scarves made from ugly t-shirts, paper stars and gift boxes.

The crowd enjoyed sampling the recipes she whipped up during the demonstration time.

Special Thanks
Without the continued financial and moral support of generous donors, Sponsors, Associate Members, and Board of Directors, office staff, and committed volunteers, this RC&D Council most likely would not exist after the loss of federal funding in April of 2011. But, all those mentioned here have stayed the course and been invaluable to the work of this non-profit. A big THANK YOU goes to:

Awards & Special Recognitions

The local Council selected the following as their annual award winners:

Outstanding Sponsor Award went to Jim Meuret for providing the office space rent-free since the loss of federal funding in April of 2011. This includes a garage, storage building and adjacent parking lot as needed. The RC&D Council has placed a value of $9,000 per year on his donation.

Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway was chosen for the Top Project Award. This group has surpassed previous efforts to encourage visitors from near and far to travel Nebraska’s Highway 12 which is the northern most route across the state. This 231-mile stretch, from South Sioux City to Valentine, offers not only beautiful scenery, but cultural diversity, farming and ranching operations, rivers and streams, and a wonderful historical heritage. The RC&D Council has assisted the Byway with grant writing and marketing efforts.

Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to the following for their efforts over the past years - Kathy Dohmen, Barb Hoffart and Carol Peters – Program Support Assistants; Mary Rose Wattier, Carmen Shaffer, Nadene Chavet, Sandy Patton and Donna Christiansen – AmeriCorps Members; CloAnn Shamblen – Experience Works Office Staff; Claus “Bud” Knuth – original steering committee member and still a present Board Member; Jan Jorgensen – RC&D Coordinator.

Financial Report for 12-1-12 to 11-30-13

**Income**

- Membership fees ...................................................................... $15,175.00
- Projects & Grants ................................................................. $36,512.69
- Other Income ........................................................................ $3,033.31

**Account Balance**

- Checking Account ................................................................... $43,973.04

**Certificate of Deposits**

- Farm to Family ......................................................................... $3,243.57
- RC&D .......................................................................................... $16,552.01
- Endowment ............................................................................... $24,629.36

**Expenses**

- Donations & Memberships ................................................... $1,175.00
- Projects & Grants ................................................................. $49,232.01
- Rent & Utilities ......................................................................... $3,454.98
- Payroll Expense ........................................................................ $15,478.91
- Professional Fees & Insurance ........................................... $2,533.90
- Travel & Registrations ............................................................. $1,400.53
- Office Expense .......................................................................... $1,026.72

**Total Income** ................................................................. $54,721.00

**Total Expenses** ............................................................... $74,302.05

**Net Income** ...........................................................................(19,581.05)