



# Sand & Soapweed

Newsletter of the *Middle Niobrara Natural Resources District*

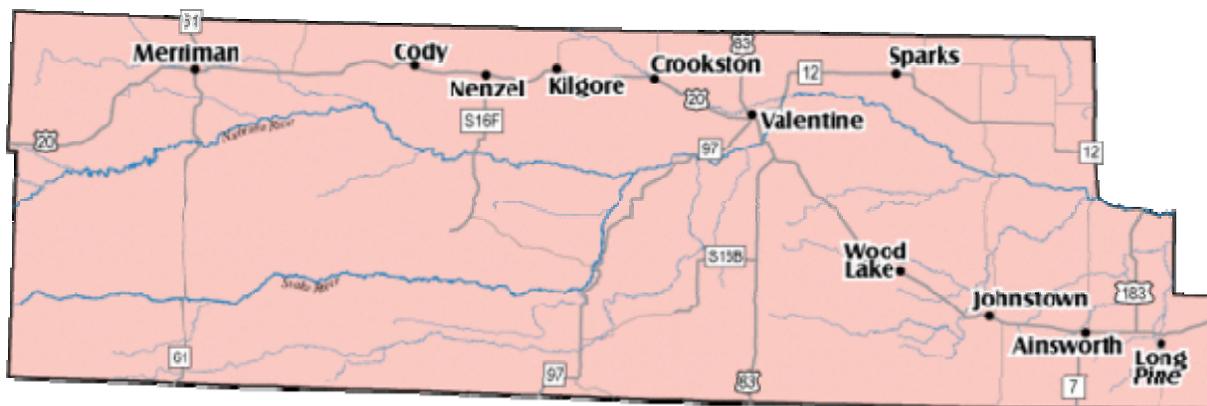
*Summer 2012*

## ***LB483 New Irrigated Acres and Uses***

The Middle Niobrara NRD will be accepting applications for new irrigated acres and/or uses from August 6 through September 21, 2012.

You can view the current rules and regulations for applying for new irrigated acres and/or uses on the web site at [www.mnprd.org](http://www.mnprd.org) or you can stop by the office to pick up a copy of the rules and regulations.

**Please call with questions about maps, rules, or filling out the application for new irrigated acres and/or uses before submitting to the Middle Niobrara NRD.**



**Middle Niobrara NRD**

## **Cost-Share Funds Available**

Middle Niobrara NRD has Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP) cost-share funds available for windbreak plantings, cross fencing, non-replacement wells and tanks, pipelines, dams, and other conservation measures that you might want to implement on your property. Applications will be accepted until funds are exhausted. Anyone interested in applying for assistance should contact the Middle Niobrara NRD or your local NRCS office for additional information. Middle Niobrara NRD, 526 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St., Valentine, NE 69201 or call us at 402-376-3241.

## **Water Quality Cost Share**

The Middle Niobrara Natural Resources District (MNNRD) will start accepting applications for its Water Quality Cost-Share Program in November. Applications are available at the MNNRD office in Valentine or the Valentine and Ainsworth Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices'. Items, activities, and services available for cost-share include: surge valves, drop nozzles and sprinklers, and converting siphon tubes to gated pipes. Cost-share is limited to 50% up to \$2,500 per application. A review and rating period will follow the sign up. Any questions regarding this program should be directed to Tim Storm at the Valentine office (402) 376-3241.

## **Chemigation Inspections & Static Water Levels**

We are currently in the process of finishing up chemigation inspections in the district. It has been a long HOT summer and Travis has been working hard to get all of the inspections done. Soon it will be time to start on the static water level readings. Last year static water level readings were taken on 101 wells and the average reading for the Middle Niobrara NRD showed a .76 foot increase in water levels. Given the hot dry summer we do not expect to see the same results this year. Look for more information on this subject later this fall.

# **Save the Date-November 8, 2012**

**What: Farm & Ranch Seminar**

**When: November 8, 2012 9:00 A.M.**

**Where: Ainsworth Community Center**

**Topics to be discussed include:** Drought Management, Climate Change, Limited Irrigation, Grazing Impacts & Strategies, Market Outlook, and others.

## **Trees–Trees–Trees**

Fall is the time to assess your spring tree plantings and start planning for next year. Shane Hamilton, Natural Resources Coordinator, will be in the field in the next few weeks doing survivability checks on the plantings that were done by the Middle Niobrara NRD this spring. Those of you who had us plant trees for you will be receiving information in the mail on the survival rates of your trees so you can start planning for re-planting in the spring of 2013. As part of your NSWCP tree planting program contract, the Middle Niobrara NRD will provide cost-share on trees that need to be re-planted for up to 2 years following the initial planting. This allows you to ensure that you have a healthy vibrant shelterbelt that will provide livestock and wildlife benefits for years to come.

## **DRIP IRRIGATION AVAILABLE AT NRD**

Consider drip irrigation for this coming springs plantings. Drip irrigation applies water slowly and directly to the roots of plants through small flexible pipes and flow control devices called emitters. Drip irrigation uses 30 to 50 percent less water than sprinkler irrigation and usually costs less to install. Since water is applied directly to the root zone, evaporation and runoff are minimized. Drip irrigation is recommended for use on trees, shrubs, and flowers in the high and moderate water use zones of the landscape to maximize efficiency. For trees and shrubs, it is generally best to use a system that allows you to insert emitters wherever water is needed. The appropriate number of emitters per plant and flow rate per emitter depends on the size and type of plant. Generally, the larger the plant, the more water it requires. During very dry weather, an emitter system needs to run about three times per week for 4 hours each time to meet the optimum water needs of the plant. Keep in mind that some species require more water than others. The Middle Niobrara NRD has available all the components for drip irrigation. Call the office for more information @ 402-376-3241.

# **Master Plan 2012**

The Middle Niobrara NRD board of Directors recently approved an updated Master Plan for the District. This plan summarizes the District's purposes and projects from the origination of the NRD, to current plans, and future direction for the Middle Niobrara NRD. This plan is reviewed and updated every ten years by the district to assess progress and plan for the future. What follows is a little background on NRD's and the Middle Niobrara NRD in particular that is contained in the Master Plan 2012.

On July 1, 1972, over 150 special purpose districts in Nebraska were merged to form 24 natural resources districts. In 1989, the Middle Missouri Tribes and Papio Missouri NRDs were merged reducing the number of districts to 23. With boundaries generally utilizing Nebraska's river basins, NRDs are empowered to provide for effective planning, development, and management of the state's natural resources. Districts have the authority to levy up to 4.5 cents per 100 dollars of valuation in property taxes. This provides funding for a wide variety of programs and to hire staff to carry out these activities.

As stated in Chapter 2-3229 of the revised Statutes of Nebraska, the purpose of natural resources districts shall be to develop and execute, through the exercise of powers and authorities in this act, plans, facilities, works and programs related to:

- 1) Erosion prevention and control,
- 2) Prevention of damages from flood water and sediment,
- 3) Flood prevention and control,
- 4) Soil conservation,
- 5) Water supply for any beneficial uses,
- 6) Development, management, utilization and conservation of groundwater and surface water,
- 7) Pollution control,
- 8) Solid waste disposal and sanitary drainage,
- 9) Drainage improvement and channel rectification,
- 10) Development and management of fish and wildlife habitat,
- 11) Development and management of recreational and park facilities,
- 12) Forestry and range management.

The Middle Niobrara Natural Resources District's main office is located in Valentine, which has a staff of 5. In addition, the District has a sub-office in Ainsworth, which is utilized for storage and services, and a clerk is provided to the Natural Resources Conservation Service offices in Ainsworth and Valentine.

A board of directors ranging from 7 to 21 members governs each NRD in Nebraska. The Middle Niobrara NRD board consists of 7 members, 6 from designated sub-districts and 1 at-large. They meet once a month and are responsible for making the administrative and policy

decisions. Each year, a budget is developed and approved by the board. The budget outlines the property tax revenue necessary to maintain the present programs and services as well as other sources of income such as sales, services and grants. Typically, the Middle Niobrara NRD budget is \$1,000,000.

The Middle Niobrara NRD is located in north central Nebraska and includes portions of Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha and Rock Counties. With an area of 2.9 million acres, it is one of the larger districts in the state, but is one of the least populated. Some of the towns in the district are Merriman, Cody, Nenzel, Kilgore, Crookston, Valentine, Sparks, Norden, Wood Lake, Johnstown, Ainsworth, Meadville, and Long Pine.

Although the district is physically large in size, it is sparsely populated. Approximately 9,100 persons reside in the NRD with 60% living in cities or villages. In recent decades, Brown, Keya Paha and Rock counties have seen population declines, with Cherry County enjoying a small increase.

**Approximate Area in the Middle Niobrara NRD, by County**

Cherry County	2,396,160 acres
Brown County	389,760 acres
Keya Paha County	167,040 acres
Rock County	30,720 acres
Total	2,983,680 acres (4,662 sq. miles)





**MIDDLE NIOBRARA NRD**  
**526 E. 1<sup>ST</sup> St.**  
**VALENTINE NE 69201**  
**402-376-3241**  
**[www.mnnrd.org](http://www.mnnrd.org)**

**DIRECTORS**

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