



# Sand & Soapweed

Newsletter of the **Middle Niobrara  
Natural Resources District**

**Summer 2013**

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

The Middle Niobrara NRD will be accepting applications for new irrigated acres and/or uses from July 1<sup>st</sup> – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013. You can view current rules and regulation for applying for new irrigated acres and/or uses on the web site at [www.mnnrd.org](http://www.mnnrd.org) or you can stop by the office to pick up a copy of the application along with the rules and regulations. We encourage everyone to do a test well before applying.

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.

## **Cost-Share Funds Available**

The 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. Application 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.

# Chemigation Inspections, Nitrate Sampling & Static Water Levels

We are currently in the process of finishing up chemigation inspections in the district. A numbering system was developed earlier this year for each pivot to aid in pivot identification and organization. We appreciate everyone who assisted with inspections!

The Middle Niobrara NRD will be out in the district taking nitrate samples this month, if you would like to be added to our yearly sampling route please contact the office. Over 250 locations will be sampled this year. If you have a pivot that will be sampled this year, you can aid nitrate collection by inserting a spigot if one is not already installed.

Static water levels were measured at 138 sites this year during the last 2 weeks in April and the first week of May. The table below shows a summary of the results. The comparison is from the Spring of 2012 to the Spring of 2013.

**The largest increase and decrease in static water levels along with an average for each county and for the entire district**

	<b>Average</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Brown</b>	-1.74 ft.	0.11 ft.	-4.34 ft.
<b>Cherry</b>	-1.06 ft.	2.42 ft.	-6.61 ft.
<b>Keya Paha</b>	-2.86 ft.	-1.12 ft.	-4.21 ft.
<b>Rock</b>	-2.51 ft.	-0.79 ft.	-4.1 ft.
<b>District</b>	-1.7 ft.	2.42 ft.	-6.61 ft.

## Order Next Year's Trees by October 1<sup>st</sup>

A tree order form has been included in this issue of *Sand & Soapweed*. Please fill it out and return to the MNNRD office by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. Special orders and fruit trees can be made, but please contact the office ASAP with any special requests. Trees come in bundles of 25 and potted trees come in lots of 30. If you have questions regarding tree orders or tree species, please contact the MNNRD office.



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## Middle Niobrara NRD receives grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust

The Middle Niobrara NRD received a \$150,000 grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to create a Watershed Management Plan for the Long Pine Creek and its tributaries. Located primarily in Brown County, the Long Pine Creek watershed encompasses over 300,000 acres and contains the longest self-sustaining trout stream in the state. In recent years, the Long Pine Creek watershed has seen considerable erosion along the stream bank creating problems for structures downstream and altering the biological habitat.

Furthermore, the Long Pine Creek has been listed on the impaired waters list for *E. coli*. Grant money will be used to develop a detailed Watershed Management Plan which will include a stream assessment and evaluation for the entire watershed and restoration plans for select



Pictured left to right: Director Greg Wilke, General Manager Mike Murphy, Director Martin Graff and Director Justin Hammond

tributaries. The Middle Niobrara NRD has hired JEO

Consulting Group to assist with the Watershed Management Plan. A kick-off meeting was held May 21<sup>st</sup> in Ainsworth with approximately 40 interested individuals in attendance. This project will be guided by public input and the Middle Niobrara NRD is currently looking for interested individuals to make up a stakeholder group. Please contact the office if interested in fulfilling this role or for more information.



*We would appreciate if all everyone would install a water spigot onto your check valves to facilitate nitrate sampling this fall.*

## **Big Rock Fire Replants**

It has been seven years since the Big Rock fire occurred along the northern edge of Valentine. Over 3,000 acres burned that July, decimating the forest in the area. That following spring, the Middle Niobrara NRD along with the efforts of students from Valentine High School and Middle School, the Valentine FFA chapter, City of Valentine, Valentine Lion's and Jaycee's, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Sandhill Strikers (NWTF chapter), RMEF and the Boy Scouts, replanting began in the burned area. Replant efforts have continued each year and planning for next year has already begun. To date, 14,300 native trees and shrubs have been planted in the burned area.



The Valentine FFA assisted in replanting in the Big Rock Fire area earlier this year

## **Tree Season 2013**

Tree season 2013 was a success despite the hot and dry year last year. The Middle Niobrara NRD sold over 49,000 trees and machine planted over 18,000. Survivability checks on this year's machine plantings will be conducted this fall by MNNRD staff. Survivability results will be mailed to landowners who had machine plantings conducted by the Middle Niobrara NRD this spring. A tree order form has been included in this newsletter to assist with re-plant planning. As part of the NSWCP contract, the Middle Niobrara NRD will provide cost-share on trees that need to be re-planted for up to two years following the initial planting, with a \$100 minimum cost-share. Please contact the office with any questions or for more information.

## **New Faces at the Middle Niobrara NRD**

Two new faces have joined the Middle Niobrara NRD team. Alicia Ross and Stephanie Butler were hired this Spring to fill two vacant positions. Alicia Ross is the new administrative assistant. Alicia was born and raised in Millboro, SD and is a graduate of Valentine High School. After graduating from Pratt Community College with an Associates of Science, Alicia spent five years working for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Alicia brings experience in natural resources and enthusiasm to the office and is always happy to help anyone. With her free time, Alicia enjoys horseback riding and spending time with her family.

Stephanie Butler has been taken on as this year's intern and resource technician. Stephanie is originally from Oklahoma but has spent the last four years in Nebraska. Stephanie graduated from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK with a B.S. in Fish and Wildlife Biology and from the University of Nebraska at Kearney with an M.S. in Biology. While attending UNK, she got the privilege of working in 32 counties of Nebraska and was thrilled to find a career that will keep her in the beautiful Sandhills.

**WANTED:** Several hundred weather watchers in Nebraska. If you are willing to spend a few minutes each day recording measurements of precipitation using backyard gauges, which will be provided by your local Natural Resources District and a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, **NeRAIN** leaders want **YOU**. Contact Travis Connot at the MNNRD office or visit <http://nerain.dnr.ne.gov/nerain/> for more information.

## **Middle Niobrara NRD partners with Niobrara Council to Create Nebraska's First Firewise ® Communities**

The Niobrara Council has signed an interlocal agreement with Cherry, Brown, Keya Paha, and Rock Counties, the Middle and Lower Niobrara NRDs, Region 24 Emergency Management and the Nebraska Forest Service to establish the first Firewise ® communities in Nebraska. The Firewise ® Community project is part of the National Fire Protection Association that was established to reduce the effects of wildfires by producing and promoting codes and standards, conducting research and training along with advocating wildfire education. The Middle Niobrara NRD has entered the agreement as Valentine and Long Pine have been identified as the top two most at-risk areas for wildfires and are located within our district. The Niobrara Council will be working with residents in the upcoming months to identify potential communities that fit the Firewise ® Community requirements. These requirements are based on factors such as water availability, individual structure defendability, fire truck access and evacuation routes. Once selected, the communities will work with the Niobrara Council to plan projects that will increase wildfire safety for their community. For example, the community may plan a weekend that focuses on brush management or an educational event concentrating on firewise vegetation surrounding homes and buildings. For more information, please contact the Niobrara Council at 402-376-2793.

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**MIDDLE NIOBRARA NRD**

**526 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St.**

**Valentine, NE 69201**

**402-376-3241**

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

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Tim Storm  
Alicia Ross  
Travis Connot  
Stephanie Butler  
Shawn Conner**

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# Bundled \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Wrapped \_\_\_\_\_

MIDDLE NIOBRARA NRD

# CONSERVATION TREE PROGRAM ORDER FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Ainsworth \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the location where you prefer to pick up your seedlings. Valentine \_\_\_\_\_

*EACH SPECIES MUST BE ORDERED IN LOTS OF 25*

**POTTED CONIFERS**  
(order in lots of 30)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Rocky Mt. Juniper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Eastern Red Cedar
- \_\_\_\_\_ CO. Blue Spruce
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ponderosa Pine
- \_\_\_\_\_ Austrian Pine

- \_\_\_\_\_ American Plum
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lilac
- \_\_\_\_\_ Service Berry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Skunkbush Sumac
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gray Dogwood

**SHRUBS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hardy Apricot
- \_\_\_\_\_ Crabapple
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hazelnut
- \_\_\_\_\_ Buffaloberry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chokecherry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elderberry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sandcherry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black Chokeberry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cotoncaster
- \_\_\_\_\_ Golden Currant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nanking Cherry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Caragana
- \_\_\_\_\_ Amur Honeysuckle

**DECIDUOUS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Kentucky Coffee Tree
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black Walnut
- \_\_\_\_\_ Native Cottonwood
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hybrid Cottonwood
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hackberry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Honeylocust
- \_\_\_\_\_ Amur Maple
- \_\_\_\_\_ Silver Maple
- \_\_\_\_\_ Diamond Willow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Golden Willow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bur Oak
- \_\_\_\_\_ Russian Olive
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gambel Oak
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black Cherry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Swamp White Oak

**CONIFERS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Eastern Redcedar
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rocky Mt. Juniper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Colorado Blue Spruce
- \_\_\_\_\_ Austrian Pine
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jack Pine
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ponderosa Pine
- \_\_\_\_\_ SW White Pine
- \_\_\_\_\_ Black Hills Spruce
- \_\_\_\_\_ Concolor Fir
- \_\_\_\_\_ Norway Spruce
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bald Cypress

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ORDERS

The tree order form is for conservation trees that you will be planting yourself. If you want the NRD to help design a windbreak, hand plants or machine plant your trees please contact the MINNRD office at (402) 376-3241 or 1-800-891-7645

**NO GUARANTEES ON TREE SURVIVABILITY**

You will be billed for a 50% deposit when your order is confirmed.  
We'll call you when your trees arrive in early April.  
Set prices will be determined fall of 2013.

**Please submit this form to the MINNRD by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013**

(some species may be available after this date)  
To submit this form turn over and fold in half. Postage is necessary.