

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
Thursday July 09, 2020
Andy Bohnenkamp, District Conservationist**

The following is my brief update on NRCS activities and “happenings” throughout the NRD since July.

PROGRAMS

EQIP

We are wrapping up the EQIP contracting phase and only have a few left to finish approving. Totals to-date in state, area and local EQIP funding for our NRD is \$660,163. So-far we have approved a total of 23 contracts on over 3,500 acres. I do not anticipate any further funding for EQIP at this late date however I will not rule out a last-minute push for more contracts here in the next 2 weeks. It appears we will fall far short of my goal of over 1.2 million in EQIP funds this year, however for NRCS this was an exceptional year that we knew going in was going to throw us some curveballs, Covid-19 notwithstanding!

CSP

We have finished writing and approving all Conservation Stewardship Program contracts in the NRD for Fiscal Year 2020. This year we approved and obligated a total of 5 CSP contracts for roughly \$800,000 on 4,700 acres.

CRP

We have switched gears from EQIP and CSP contracts to reviewing and writing CRP contracts for Sign-up 54. Last month I reported that we had roughly 115 contracts to write and since then we have added another 29 to the total, so 134 CRP contracts is our final total in our NRD to improve and establish wildlife habitat. We are actively working together with FSA to finish these and get them back to FSA for final approval.

Emergency Haying and Grazing of CRP contracts has been opened-up for Thurston and Burt Counties due to drought conditions there. This allows CRP participants to hay or graze a portion of the CRP contract acres without a program or contract payment reduction to assist livestock producers affected by the drought in the area. CRP participants in these counties can call the Walthill and Tekamah FSA offices for more information.

Staffing:

I am happy to announce that we have hired Davin French for the NRCS Soil Conservation Technician position in the Walthill Field Office. Davin has been a federal contract employee in the Walthill field office for the last 2 years and has been working right alongside the NRCS and NRD staff. He officially started his new position Monday August 3rd and we are super happy to have him transition into his new position there in Walthill!

I am also happy to announce the we have hired Chuck Venditte as the NRCS Soil Conservation Technician in the Blair Field Office. Chuck has a diverse background working for the Douglas County Engineers Department as well as an Environmental Scientist for a local engineering firm. Chuck will officially start his new position Monday August 17 in the Blair FO and we are really happy to welcome him onto the team!

Office re-opening:

The Dakota City Service Center has moved to Phase 1 of our Covid -19 office re-opening playbook as of August 10, it joins the ranks of the Tekamah and Blair Field Offices and is yet to be determined when we will be moving all 3 offices to Phase 2. Walthill is still in the gated phase and remains closed with only 1 NRCS employee allowed to work in the office at a time.

That's all for now, thank you for your time!

Respectfully Submitted

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P-MRNRD District Conservationist



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