

NET Grants Awarded to HPWMA

The High Plains Weed Management Association has received \$1,600,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the "North Platte Invasive Species Control Project." HPWMA also received two additional grants from the Trust, one for \$14,100 for the Invasive Species Control Summit, May 6-8, 2008 and \$28,300 for continuation of the Nine Mile Creek Project. The Trust Board announced preliminary funding for the project at its last meeting on February 7 in Lincoln. This is the first year of two grants totaling \$1,800,000. The project is one of the 77 projects receiving \$14,798,718 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year.

The funds from the Trust will be used to remove and control invasive species in the riparian areas of the North Platte River watershed. The current drought in Western Nebraska has forced landowners to evaluate every available option for water conservation. The High Plains Weed Management Association (consisting of eight panhandle counties) has taken on the responsibility to address the water loss caused by the expan-

sive growth of invasive species. Three main invasive species (Russian olive, Saltcedar and Phragmites) are targeted to be controlled.

The Russian olive will be sheared, stump treated and removed to areas not in the flood plain. Saltcedar and Phragmites will be treated and left standing to ensure complete eradication. The High Plains Weed Management Institute will be leveraging these funds with in-put from conservation partners and landowner participation. This collaboration will assist in restoring the riparian areas to their more natural states. The project will reduce water consumption benefiting the entire Platte River watershed. The possibility of flooding due to debris in the flood plain will be greatly reduced after it is removed. Restoring native habitat and pastureland will have a desired effect on the treated areas. This project will enhance the aesthetics of the entire watershed.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust works to preserve, protect and restore our natural resources for future generations. You may visit the Trust's website at:

www.environmentaltrust.org for more information.

HPWMA is also pleased to announce the appointment of Project Manager Dennis Beyer, and Field Coordinator Roy Lyles. Dennis and Roy will be in charge of project implementation and will be a great asset to the project. Dennis Beyer will be located within the Panhandle RC&D office in Scottsbluff, and Roy Lyles will continue his duties through the North Platte Natural Resources District, and will be housed in that office.

To learn more about this great project, please contact Project Manager Dennis Beyer at 308-632-1311 at his new location within the Panhandle RC&D office located at 1517 Broadway, Suite 101 in Scottsbluff.

HPWMA is currently in the process of developing its website, so please visit www.panhandlercd.com/hpwma.htm for more information!

Panhandle RC&D is currently accepting Project Proposals to meet the needs your organization or community may have. If you have a project idea that fits within our five areas of focus: economic development, recreation and tourism, natural resources improvement, community improvement or education, please contact us to find out how we can help!

Upcoming Events

May:

14th—Friends of the Intertribal Gathering Committee Mtg. 11:00 a.m. Chadron Native American Center

6th, 7th, 8th—Invasive Species Control Summit, Gering Civic Center

8th—RC&D Board of Director's Mtg 11:00 a.m. Bluffs Business Center

8th—HPWMA Board of Director's Mtg 1:30 p.m. Gering Civic Center

15th—HPWMA Board Organizational Meeting 11:00 a.m. Gering Civic Center

27th—Buckboard Board of Directors Mtg 7:00 p.m. Bluffs Business Center

June:

2nd—Buckboard Riding Season Begins

9th through 13th—Pine Ridge Teacher's Institute

12th—RC&D Board of Director's Mtg 11:00 a.m. Bluffs Business Center

13th, 14th, 15th—Ninth Annual Intertribal Gathering

24th—Buckboard Board of Directors Mtg 7:00 p.m. Bluffs Business Center

28th—Picnic in the Pasture

July 20th—Blue Creek Blues Festival, Lewellen

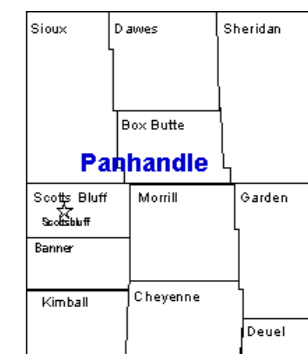
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Five Year Area Plan

RC&D is currently in the planning stages of developing its "Five Year Area Plan," which will lay the blueprint for the focus areas of the organization from 2009-2014. Local citizens, organizations, and businesses are welcome to provide input during this planning time.

RC&D will be hosting a planning meeting in order to iron out the details of the area plan. If you are interested in being a part of the planning process, or would like to attend the meeting (date and time TBA), please contact our office!

As one of the twelve designated RC&D areas in Nebraska, Panhandle RC&D covers the eleven counties of the Nebraska Panhandle.



Panhandle RC&D Has Moved!

In order to accommodate growing project needs, Panhandle Resource Conservation & Development, Inc. is pleased to announce it has moved into a bigger space. RC&D is still located within the Bluffs Business Center at 1517 Broadway, but has moved into a bigger office directly across the hall. Program Coordinator Ron Moore and Program Assistant Jennifer Rogers will also be sharing the space with High Plains Weed Management Association's Project Coordinator Dennis Beyer. All three can be reached at (308) 632-1311. Please contact us or visit us on the web at www.panhandlercd.com.

Spotlight on...

Organic Farming Initiative

Responding to increased interest in organic farming, the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council partnered with eight other areas in the state to sponsor a 3-year, statewide education program to help farmers and ranchers transition to organic production. The Organic Farming Statewide project is partially funded through a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. The Trust is funded by proceeds of the Nebraska Lottery and private donations and has awarded more than \$126 million to conservation projects in Nebraska since 1994.

Spurred by the Organic Transition Incentive offered by the Nebraska Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and fueled by premium prices (normally double that of commodity

grains), many Nebraska farmers and ranchers want to learn more about organic production. But, because organic management requires a systems change rather than a practice adjustment, the organic "unknowns" are keeping farmers from tackling the social and economic risks of transition.

This project is designed to provide the needed information at the local RC&D level from experienced local organic farmers, supported by three organic farming technicians. Farm tours, information meetings, and statewide gatherings will provide farmers the knowledge base and social environment needed to decide if their operation is suited for organic farming.

The nine RC&Ds in the project include: Northeast Nebraska RC&D, Plainview;

Nebraska Loess Hills RC&D, Oakland; PrairieLand RC&D, Madison; Nebraska Great Plains RC&D, David City; Five Rivers RC&D, Tecumseh; Trailblazer RC&D Red Cloud; South Central Nebraska RC&D, Doniphan; Loup Basin RC&D, Ord; and Panhandle RC&D, Scottsbluff.

"We recognized the growth of organic farming practices in the state and could see a need for an education program to support this type of agriculture," says Jan Jorgensen, Northeast Nebraska RC&D Coordinator. To learn more about the program, contact Panhandle RC&D at (308) 632-1311 or email panhandle.rcd@allophone.com.

PANHANDLE RC&D

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We're on the web!
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Panhandle
RC&D, Inc.'s
"Values" are to
create solutions
for communities
and their natural
resources.



Empowering Citizens to Build Strong Communities

«AddressBlock»

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Gary Fisher Board President: "I feel it is a privilege to be part of the Panhandle RC&D, an organization that works for and helps all citizens of the Panhandle counties. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the RC&D helps not-for-profit economic development, recreation, tourism, natural resources, and education projects with organization, finding funding, writing grants, and discussing ideas."



Our Mission

Regional betterment for the eleven Panhandle counties in Nebraska through mutual cooperation and participation of private and public interests.

Our Vision

A well-adjusted, developed community incorporating agriculture, industry, tourism, recreation and commercial enterprises to promote an economy which has the potential to enhance the quality of life for all families and individuals.

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Panhandle RC&D Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

April 2008

High Plains Weed Management Assoc. and the RC&D Team Up

At the March 13th, 2008 meeting of the Panhandle RC&D Board of Directors, the board unanimously voted to approve a collaboration that is sure to be beneficial not only to the organization's involved, but for every citizen in the Nebraska Panhandle.

The High Plains Weed Management Association, a newly formed organization covering Scotts Bluff, Banner, Kimball, Morrill, Cheyenne, Garden, Deuel and southern Sioux counties requested sponsorship from RC&D in order to further its goal of targeting invasive species in the Panhandle. Russian olive, saltcedar, Canada thistle, musk thistle, scotch thistle, phragmites and other species have all become a significant threat to the Panhandle way of life.

Through collaboration with local landowners, business owners, and local, state, and federal wildlife and conservation agen-

cies, HPWMA hopes to target these invasive species along the Platte river and its channels and tributaries.

HPWMA President Jeff Schledewitz said, "The RC&D is the perfect fit for us. With their guidance we will be able to smoothly complete our non-profit status, and they will be able to help the Association with administrative, financial, grant-seeking, and development assistance."

The WMA will be housed at the RC&D office, located at 1517 Broadway, Suite 101 in Scottsbluff. The Association's Project Manager Dennis Beyer and Field Coordinator Roy Lyles will be housed at the RC&D office, and the two organization's will split the duties of Program Assistant Jennifer Rogers.

In addition to conducting specific weed removal and management projects in each of the



eight counties, the HPWMA is also co-sponsoring a three-day Invasive Species Control Summit to be held May 6-8 in Gering (see below).

For more information about the High Plains Weed Management Association, including membership or project sites, please contact Project Manager Dennis Beyer at (308) 632-1311 or President Jeff Schledewitz at (308) 436-6709.

Information is also available at <http://www.npnrd.org/hpwma.htm> or <http://www.panhandlercd.org/hpwma.htm>.

Invasive Species Control Summit

May 6-8, 2008 at the Gering Civic Center

The Invasive Species Control Summit, a joint venture between organizations from Nebraska, Wyoming, federal and state agencies, and landowners. This event will be held May 6-8, 2008 at the Gering Civic Center. Registrations are still being accepted (please see enclosed registration and brochure).

The Summit promises to provide a unique variety of speakers and topics on invasive species control and is open to any interested individuals. In addition to nationally-recognized speakers as well as

local experts, there will also be tours of the Nine-Mile Creek and North Platte River recovery programs on the final day, in order to display the work that has been accomplished and is yet to be done in the local area.

If you are unable to attend all three days, day passes are available at a reduced rate. Please see the enclosed form for registration information, or call (308) 635-6700 or visit www.npnrd.org/summit for more information.