

Conservation is our purpose and our passion

By Janet Lagler

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Ever wonder about all of those acronyms that are used at the USDA building here in Grant? EQIP, WRP, WHIP, CRP, SWAPA, NRCS. Let's start with NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), NRCS has expanded to become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges, like climate change.

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned, making stewardship by private landowners absolutely critical to the health of our Nation's environment.

NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

Science and technology are critical to good conservation. NRCS experts from many disciplines come together to help landowners conserve natural resources in efficient, smart and sustainable ways.

Whether developed in a laboratory or on the land, NRCS science and technology helps landowners make the right decisions for every natural resource.

NRCS succeeds through partnerships, working closely with individual farmers and ranchers, landowners, local conservation districts, government agencies, tribes, Earth Team volunteers and many other people and groups that care about the quality of America's natural resources.

We work at the local level, –in field offices at USDA Service Centers in nearly every county in the nation. NRCS employees' understanding of local resource concerns and challenges result in conservation solutions that last.

NRCS works with and provides technical assistance to landowners and land users so that the landowners/users can develop and implement conservation plans which address the natural resource concerns and needs of the land.

NRCS assists landowners and land users utilize a number of programs which provide cost-share assistance. Some of these include:

- EQIP–Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- WHIP–Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
- WRP–Wetland Reserve Program
- AWEP – Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

NRCS serves as a technical resource for and works toward improving conservation programs such as CRP–Conservation Reserve Program; administered by FSA–Farm Service Agency; and NSWCP–Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program; funded by NRD–Natural Resources District.

The purpose and passion for conservation is shared among many. It is shared between NRCS employees and partners who help people help the land. And it is shared by the landowners with whom we work. Our passion is manifested through the benefits derived from stewardship of private lands—benefits we all enjoy, such as cleaner water and air, improved soils and abundant wildlife habitat.

Priorities Addressed by NRCS: Groundwater Quality, Rangeland Health, Riparian Area Improvement, Wetlands, Soil Erosion on Cropland, Wildlife Habitat

Special Projects: Livestock Well-Being Project, Republican Valley Limited Irrigation Demonstration Project.

If you have not visited the local NRCS office lately, come in and meet our newest employees. Briana Brooks, soil conservationist. grew up in Goth. She graduated from the University of Lincoln with Bachelor Degrees in grazing livestock and animal science. She worked in Hartington, for two years before transferring to the Grant office.

Janet Lagler was recently hired as the data entry specialist.

Claudia Stevenson, resource conservationist, has been with the agency for 25 years, with 20 of those years being in Grant.

Patty Clough, NRD district secretary, has been an employee for 10 years.

Please come in or call 308-352-4776 for any questions or conservation needs.