

# Natural Resources News

Fall 1999

A Newsletter of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District

Vol.

Come visit our web page to find out more about what we can do for you: <http://tpnrd.nrc.state.ne.us/tpnrd>

## Deep Soil Testing Cost-Share Program

The purpose of this cost-share program is to encourage producers to better manage fertilizer application by determining the complete soil element content that already exists in the crop root zone. By utilizing existing nitrogen and adding only the fertilizer that is needed to produce this year's crop the producer decreases the potential for ground water contamination and over fertilization.

Cost-share of fifteen dollars per sample will be paid for each 40-acre sample submitted to the lab, with a limit of \$300 per producer per year. A two-part sample will be required. The top sample will be taken from 0-8 inches and will be tested for nitrate nitrogen, phosphate, potassium, sulfur, zinc, pH and organic matter. The second part of the sample will be taken in a range of 8-36 inches, and will be tested of nitrate nitrogen. A shallower sample will be accepted where soil types will not allow a deeper sample. There is no need to continue to sample once gravel is reached. Sampling needs vary but one composite sample per 40 acres is preferred. Special attention should be given to sampling where a significant soil type change or change in terrain. Laboratories doing the testing have to be registered with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Applications will be accepted only for irrigated fields. A cooperators farm unit participating in this program is limited to no more than 2 years. Signed cost-share applications from the producer must be submitted and approved by the District staff prior to the practice being performed.

If desired, upon receiving the lab results the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and the Natural Resources Conservation staff can meet

with each producer to help understand what the lab results mean.

**Sign up:** An initial sign-up period will occur from November 1 - December 31. During November 1 - November 30, 50% of the authorized funds will be designated for use within the Water Quality Target Areas and 50% of the authorized funds will be designated for use outside of the Water Quality Target Areas. If authorized funds remain after November 30, the remaining funds will be designated for use anywhere in the District during December 1 - December 31. If authorized funds remain after the initial sign-up period, a second sign-up period will begin on January 1.

## Irrigation Wellhead Buffer Demonstration Program

The purpose of this program is to establish an area of vegetation around irrigation wellheads that will serve as a permanent buffer to reduce the potential for ground water contamination.

Funding is available for five wellheads. The area will be established with perennial grasses or grass/legume mixtures. Pesticides may not be applied or mixed in the buffer area. Maintenance of the vegetation and control of weeds is the responsibility of the participant for a period of ten years.

The minimum size is 0.7 acres (equivalent to a 100 foot radius around the well). A flat rate of \$200 per site is available to cover seed costs, seeding, and maintenance needs.

**Sign-up:** Open immediately

Please call or stop by the Twin Platte Natural Resources District office or stop by the North Platte or Ogallala Natural Resources Conservation Service field offices for an application or to set up an appointment.

## Transect of Monitoring Wells Drilled

In the months of July and August you might have heard about many wells being drilled throughout the North Platte area. The Twin Platte Natural Resources District in conjunction with the University of Nebraska - Conservation and Survey Division drilled 16 new monitoring wells and will use 7 existing wells for a total of 23 monitoring wells. The wells have been initially pumped and sampled. A sampling schedule will be determined for future analysis from the lab results.

The transect of wells parallels Highway 83 from the hills on the south side of the valley to the hills on the north side of the valley. One of the goals of the transect is to characterize ground water and surface water relationships. The education to be gained from this transect can be used by people throughout the District. More information will be in the upcoming newsletters.

For more information on the entire transect project contact the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.



## Deadline for Livestock Waste Management Nears!

The deadline for owners/operators of livestock operations **MUST** request an inspection by the Department of Environmental Quality prior to **JANUARY 1, 2000**. Inspections requested after January 1, 2000 will be charged a fee of \$50 for Class I and II livestock operations and \$500 for Class III and IV livestock operations.

As a general rule, the larger the operation, the more likely that a permit will be needed. Just requesting an inspection of an existing operation does not mean you will be required to obtain a permit. Livestock waste regulations apply to feedlots or livestock operations that feed or hold beef cattle, dairy cattle,



## Do you know what is in your drinking water?

Are you doing everything possible to protect your family from drinking contaminated water? How do you know if your water is contaminated? Testing of your domestic wells to see what is in your water is much easier than you think.

There are different options when thinking about getting your water sampled and tested; you can contact the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and request a card to send for a kit to collect water samples and mail to the lab with the type of tests you want run on your water. The price varies with the different tests. Another option is to contact your local County Extension Office and request a kit to sample your drinking water, and again you sample the water and send it to the lab. Usually there is no charge for a kit. You usually only pay for the analysis of the water samples. There are also a variety of other private laboratories around the state who can send out kits to test your drinking water.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District encourages every homeowner to test their domestic wells by any of these means. By being an informed homeowner you are more likely to know if something is wrong with your water.

We all use water everyday and most of us take for granted just how lucky we are to have good pure drinking water. Know what is in your drinking water!

horses, swine, sheep, poultry, or other livestock in buildings, lots or pens which normally are not used for growing crops or vegetation but **does not include holding cattle in calving operations for less than 90 days**. Simply stated, if the operation can sustain vegetation in the summer months, it is not subject to LB 1209 regulations.



## 1999 High Plains Water Expo.

The High Plains Water Expo teaches seventh and eighth grade students from the surrounding communities about water. Everything from ground water to surface water in Western Nebraska.

The presenters and demonstrators are people who work with water in their jobs, and volunteer their time to help teach the students. The student's day is broken down so the students visit 5 different sites and a stop off at the D&N Event Center where they can walk around and visit more demonstrations and booths. The 5 different sites are: the Lake Maloney outlet, Fremont Slough, a wetland, the NPPD hydroelectric power plant and University research and demonstration sites. The key is these trained professionals are at the different sites and use hands on teaching skills to teach the kids. The kids love this because they get to get out of school and they get to see the whole picture and not just read about these processes from books.

This year the Natural Resources District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service again participated in the Water Expo. This year like the many others was a success! The Water Expo reached out to 370 middle school students from around the surrounding area about water. The Natural Resources Conservation Service acted as site hosts, and the Natural Resources District showed the water trailer. Thanks for all the schools attending. For more information about the water Trailer or to schedule it for your class contact the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Office.



## The Water Trailer

One of the more popular tools of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District is the water trailer. This is a hands on educational tool, which is used to educate children, and adults about water and its different relationships. The Water Trailer simulates the flow of a river, erosion, sedimentation, ground water flow, and watersheds. This would be a wonderful addition to a science lesson on water, the water cycle, or just a fun learning experiment for the group. The Water Trailer is intended to go to schools and other interested groups. It is used outside and preferably in good weather. As you can see from the picture we can go just about anywhere.

### Water Trailer Report for 1999



**For the year of 1999, the Water Trailer has been to 13 different groups, schools, and clubs reaching a total of 1,060 people.** This is a figure that we, at the Twin Platte Natural Resources District, are very proud of, and would like to thank all of the different people who invited us to their schools and meetings in 1999. We look forward to the year 2000 and hope to reach more people than we did in 1999 for a lesson your students won't soon forget! **Remember, the District's Water Trailer is the only one in the state!**

We encourage interested parties to please call early to set up an appointment.



### NOTICE!!

Before you drill a new well within **50 feet of the edge of a stream or river, or on an island in the Platte River** contact the Department of Water Resources in Lincoln at (402)471-2663.

## Twin Platte Natural Resources District

Board of Directors.....	Sub-District
Kent Boyer.....(H)368-7275.....	4
(Chairperson)	
Jim Rubenthaler.....(H)584-3578.....	At-large
(Vice-Chairperson)	
Doug Stack.....(W)535-8308.....	3
(Secretary)	
Jim Meismer.....(H)284-6509.....	5
(Treasurer)	
Dave Cotton.....(W)532-8450.....	2
Robert Fear.....(H)386-4536.....	2
Todd Kramer.....(H)764-2421.....	1
Jeff Baldrige.....(H)534-7780.....	1
Roric Paulman.....(H)386-4413.....	4
Jerry Weaver.....(W)534-9240.....	3
Frank Svoboda.....(H)284-3147.....	5

Staff Members.....	Position
Kent O. Miller.....	General Manager
Dave Slattery.....	Conservation Programs Coordinator
Bill Carhart.....	Range Programs Coordinator
Glen Bowers.....	Water Programs Coordinator
Ann Fisher.....	Water Programs Technician
Ardis Lehmkuhler.....	Administrative Assistant
Kathy Clark.....	Field Office Secretary, North Platte NRCS

Natural Resources News is the official publication of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. This quarterly publication is partially funded by a 319 Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or would like to be placed on our mailing list please feel free to submit them to:

Twin Platte Natural Resources District  
 C/O Ann Fisher, Water Programs Technician  
 P.O. Box 1347  
 North Platte, NE 69103-1347  
 Phone: (308)535-8080  
 Fax: (308)535-8207  
 e-mail: tprnd@nponline.net

## Wildlife Habitat Program

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District has program funds available to create or enhance wildlife habitat in the District. The program offers attractive cost-share rates on habitat materials such as trees, shrubs and grass seed. Some options in the program also offer water conservation mulch and fence materials to protect the trees. Annual payments for setting aside the land are also an option. To apply for this program or to get more information, contact Bill Carhart at the Twin Platte District office or e-mail him at bcarhart@nrdec.nrc.state.ne.us.

**Upcoming Events:**

**November**

**4** Twin Platte Natural Resources District Board of Directors Meeting - 7:30 p.m.CDT\* 

**11** Office Closed for Veteran's Day Holiday

**25-26** Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday 

**December**

**14** Twin Platte Natural Resources District Board of Director's Meeting - 5:30 p.m. MDT at Ramada, Limited in Ogallala

**25** Office Closed for Christmas Holiday

### Twin Platte

#### NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

111 South Dewey Street  
 North Platte, NE 69103-1347

Postal Patron