

Natural Resources News

Winter 2003

A Newsletter of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Vol. 15

Come visit our web page to find out more about what we can do for you: <http://www.tpnrd.org>

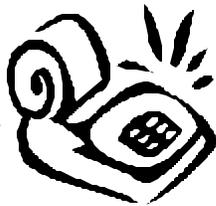
Ground Water Levels

The Ground Water Program of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District includes a monitoring program for ground water quantity and quality. The ground water quantity monitoring program in the District measures the levels in 121 wells every spring and fall and 34 wells monthly. The data collected in the monitoring program allows the Board to carryout the Districts Ground Water Management Plan and determine if management is needed to maintain the ground water aquifer. The recent drought is apparent in the data collected, but the criteria in the District's Ground Water Management Plan does not provide for the need for management at this time. On page two are graphs prepared from 3 wells the District monitors and collects data for ground water levels. If you would like more detailed information, please contact the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

Graphs on Page 2

Cut Costs of Production— Start With the Money Spent on Nitrogen

The Natural Resources District has something to help producers throughout the District. We have created a Nitrogen Report Form to help figure the amount of nitrogen to be applied. This form takes into consideration the crop type, the nitrogen in your water, applied nitrogen, manure, and residual nitrogen. It then enters all these figures into a formula and comes up with a specific amount of nitrogen needed for that field/crop. To access this tool, you can log on to our web page at www.tpnrd.org, then select the nitrogen and water report button. Try it this spring and see if it saves you money. If you have any questions feel free to call our office.



“Corners for Wildlife” and “WILD Nebraska”

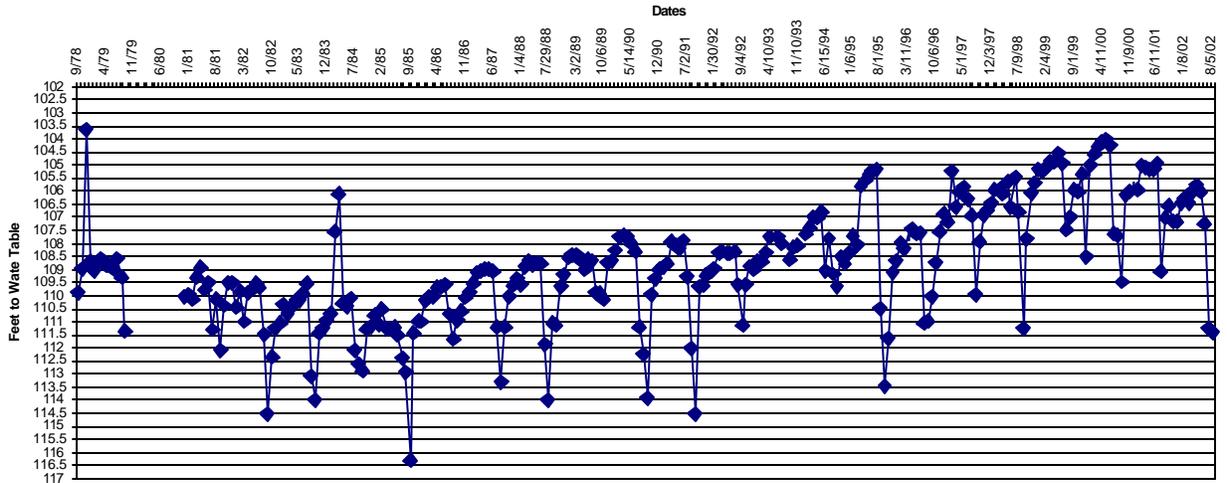
These two District programs are designed to enhance wildlife habitat on private land. Contact Bill Carhart for more information on how one or both of these programs can help you accomplish your wildlife habitat goals.

Corners for Wildlife (CFW) provides attractive cost-share on materials to convert cropland next to center pivots into habitat. A \$75 per acre annual payment is available in this program for each of the 5 years that the site is enrolled.

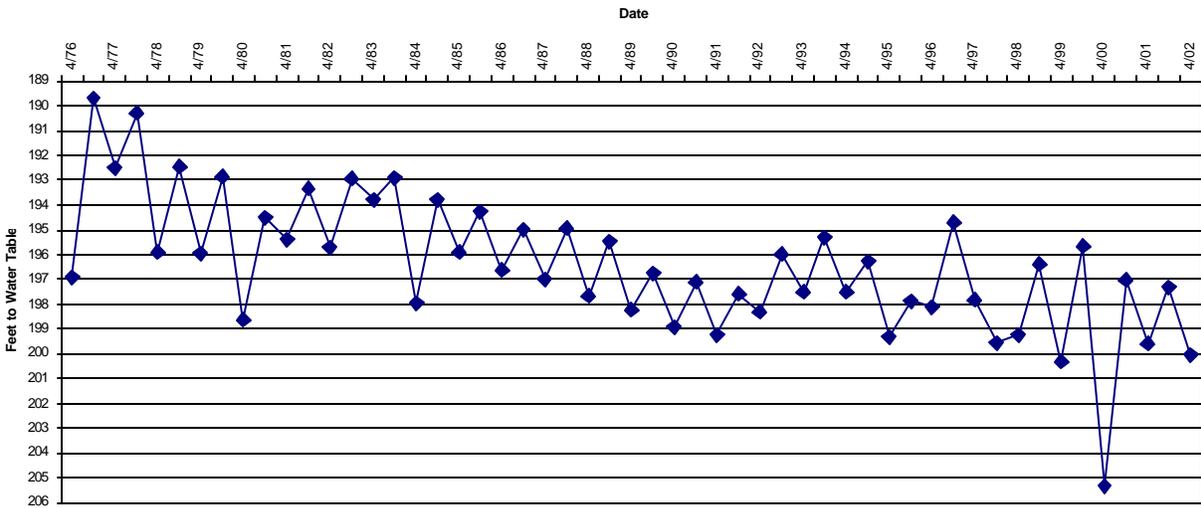
WILD Nebraska (WILD) is more versatile than CFW as it can apply to virtually any land, not just pivot corners. WILD can be used to enhance wetlands, grasslands, woody areas, and to establish buffer strips along streams or draws. WILD provides cost-share on habitat materials, and annual payments are available depending on the type of site and where it is located. There are bonus payments if the landowner allows public access. However, public access is NOT required to participate in either program.



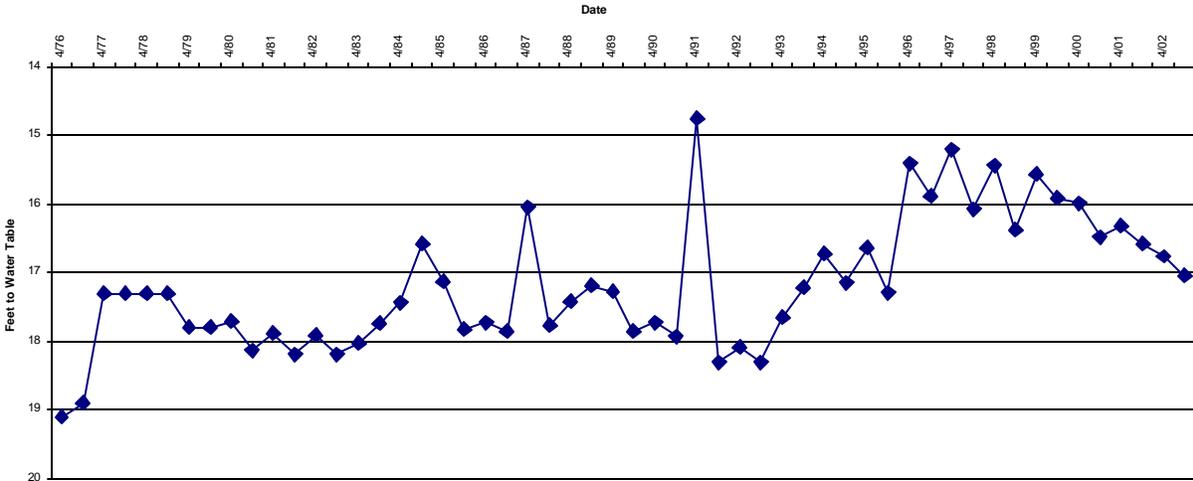
Lincoln Co Water Levels



Keith Co Water Levels



Arthur Co Water Level



Each year the Twin Platte Natural Resources District takes great pleasure in recognizing those who have made extra efforts in the pursuit of resources management.

In the fall of 1979, Skip and Eileen Marland purchased a half section of Sandhill Valley land approximately 9 miles northeast of North Platte.

A farming relationship began with the Schaeffer Family Farms from Stapleton, NE to assist the Marlands in developing center pivot irrigation, eventually powered by a three-phase REA from the Custer Public Power District. The Marlands and the Schaeffers were very methodical in the effort to focus on conservation measures, such as laying topsoil back down on areas where soil was excavated to accommodate center pivot irrigation. The Marlands and the



2002 Tree Award

Skip & Eileen Marland
&
Schaeffer Family Farms

Schaeffers have enjoyed an excellent working relationship farming together in a landlord / tenant posture for 24

consecutive years.

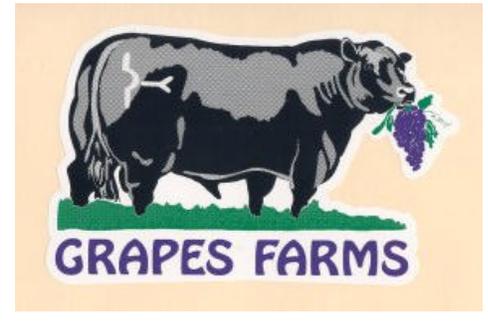
Both the Marlands and the Schaeffers attitude has been to use every conservation practice practical and to “give back” to the land more each year than what “is taken off”. Through the years, practices such as liming, manure, and even valley topsoil have been added to the weaker areas of the approximately 260 acres. The farm has been in an alfalfa-corn rotation for several years. The soils are considered sandy, with the principle soil makeup being Valentine Sand, so farming practices have always been critical.

In the spirit of conservation, as well as livestock protection and wildlife enhancement, a tree planting campaign of Eastern Red Cedar trees was started in 1986. Eventually, five tree groves were established with 100% Eastern Red Cedars from the years 1996 through 1997. During that time, over 3,500 trees were planted and cost-shared under the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program administered through the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. The five groves of trees were planted in a northwestern design, so that cattle would naturally gravitate to the respective tree belts for protection.

An interseeding of 13 acres was planted with native grasses in two pivot corners in 1995, which is now well established.

In 1934, Ivan Grapes and his brother Bill Grapes moved to this part of the country. In those first years living on a farm 15 miles northwest of Brule where the north table dropped down to the North Platte River, there were very few conservation practices being utilized.

2002 Conservation Award



That changed with the drought of the thirties and the need to stop the north and the west wind on one of the highest elevation points in Keith County. After only one year of surviving the elements, Ivan’s brother Bill and his wife left for California. Ivan remained on the farm and began planting trees on his own to provide shelter until the year 1938, when he married Tiny. Together Ivan and Tiny continued in their efforts to plant more trees for protection against abrasive storms. In 1956 and 1957, Ivan and his son Ron planted several more windbreaks with bare root trees, utilizing a Tree Conservation Program out of the Halsey National Forest in Halsey, Nebraska. The trees were all hand plants, with replacement trees being taken from the pasture.

Todd R. Grapes, the son of Ron and Judy Grapes, is the third generation family member to continue in the daily farm and ranch operation. The Grapes Family has continued with the windbreaks at the Grapes Farm and Ranch Headquarters, now located 8 miles south of the original Homestead. The first windbreaks started by Ivan and Tiny on the Old Homestead have been enhanced and extended in order to provide protection for future conservation activities.

Early on, Ivan began rotating livestock between two pastures, which has grown into a cross-fenced Rotational Grazing System. Several water tanks have also been added to better utilize over the years for erosion control measures. The practices of no-till and minimum-till farming are being used to help conserve top soil and moisture.

Each year the Grapes Family plants trees and will continue to do so for many years to come. Todd comments that he is glad that his family installed these conservation practices, because they are really meant to benefit the next generation. Todd also commented that everything and everyone will benefit from respecting, conserving, protecting, and enhancing the land that creates a great place to live in.

Twin Platte Natural Resources District

Board of Directors.....	Sub-District
Jim Rubenthaler.....(H)584-3578.....	At-large
(Chairperson)	
Doug Stack.....(W)535-8308.....	3
(Vice-Chairperson)	
Jerry Weaver.....(W)534-9240.....	3
(Secretary)	
Jim Meisner.....(H)284-6509.....	5
(Treasurer)	
Bob Petersen.....(H)532-2689.....	2
Joe Wahlgren.....(H)537-3136.....	2
Todd Kramer.....(H)764-2421.....	1
Jeff Baldrige.....(H)534-7780.....	4
Bob Wiseman.....(H)368-5866.....	4
Eric Hansen.....(W)532-6244.....	1
Dennis Schilz.....(W)287-2341.....	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
Amy Mapes.....	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:

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 North Platte, NE 69103-1347
 Phone: (308)535-8080
 Fax: (308)535-8207
 e-mail: tpnrd@nponline.net

Registering Wells — A Must

It is very important to make sure all wells are registered and the information is kept up to date because Department of Natural Resources only recognizes the rights of those wells which are registered. Registration protects you against potential lawsuits from neighboring well owners, from new wells being drilled too close to your established well, and protects your use of that water. The fee to change the ownership of a well has been waived as of July 2002. Water Rights will be becoming increasingly more important, and valuable in the years ahead. It just takes a few minutes to check to see if a well is registered, and registered properly. Please call DNR or the NRD office if you need assistance in registering your well or want to know if your wells are registered properly.

Upcoming Events:



February

- 5 & 6 North Platte Farm & Ranch Expo at the D & N Event Center
- 13 Board of Director's Meeting - 3:00 p.m. CDT*

March

- 13 Board of Director's Meeting - 3:00 p.m. CDT*

April

- 10 Board of Director's Meeting - 7:30 p.m. CDT*

* Board Meetings are held in the United Nebraska Bank Center North Platte

Twin Platte

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

111 South Dewey Street
 North Platte, NE 69101

Postal Patron