

Nebraska Surface Water Monitoring Council (NSWMC)

Semi-Annual Meeting

Tuesday, April 22, 2014, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

NDEQ Van Dorn Offices

2717 S. 8th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

Minutes

1. Attendees: NDEQ: Marty Link, Laura Johnson, Heather Bearnes, Dave Bubb, Mike Archer, Dave Schumacher, and Ken Bazata; USGS: Dave Rus; NGPC: Dave Tunink; USACE: Dave Jensen and John Hargrave; NDHHS: Elizabeth Esseks; Neb. Dept. of Ag: Craig Romary; LPSNRD: Dick Ehrman
2. Agency updates
 - a. USGS: Per a request from Jon Kenning, a more detailed update was provided
 - i. Followup to Midwest Stream Quality Assessment project presented last spring: Preliminary results show a higher than usual flush of nutrients in the spring of 2013 that may be after effects of the 2012 drought; Sampling in Papio basin for wastewater compounds hasn't turned up any unexpected results thus far; Though it was still problematic, the floating pesticide autosampler worked better than expected and should produce a daily record of pesticides at one site.
 - ii. National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) program will focus on the Dismal, Elkhorn, Maple, and Platte River sites in 2014
 - iii. National Rivers and Streams Assessment (NRSA) sampling for EPA continues this year, with more of a focus on big-river sites
 - iv. Collected a set of samples along Medicine Creek this spring in relation to the flow-augmentation project that is occurring there.
 1. Sampled above and below Wellfleet Lake, at Maywood, and above and below Harry Strunk
 2. NDEQ reported that the site above Harry Strunk is one of their sampling sites as well
 3. This flow augmentation could eventually be directed into the Platte Basin as well if the need arises
 - v. Continuous water quality monitors this year at:
 1. 3 Niobrara River sites: Agate, Sparks, and Verdel
 2. 3 Missouri River sites: NP Dodge, Council Bluffs, and LaPlatte
 3. 4 sites in the Lower Platte River Corridor: Shell, Elkhorn, Salt, and Platte
 4. Plus 3 more continuous water temperature sites: Overton, Venice, and Thedford
 - vi. Willow Creek monitoring project

1. Multi-agency effort to look at nutrient loading/cycling and it's effect on cyanobacteria blooms in the lake
 2. 3rd year of data collection this year
 - vii. Pesticide data continue to be collected, but are currently not available pending a method approval process
 - viii. Missouri River sampling this year downstream of hydraulic dredge activities
 - ix. Sampling of N. Dry Creek near Kearney in 2013 was part of a national project that had water tested for everything that has an analytical method.
- b. NDEQ
- i. Jon Kenning has left to take a position as head at MTDEQ; Blake Onken has assumed the Ag section chief at NDEQ; Need to fill a 319 coordinator position;
 - ii. Integrated Report: EPA still reviewing it;
 1. NDEQ will provide .kmz files (on their website) to import into Google Earth; See attached map;
 2. Of streams: 18% are supporting their uses; 13% are impaired; the remaining are not yet assessed
 3. 32% of lakes are impaired; 22% are supporting their uses; the remaining are not yet assessed.
 4. TMDLs: Selenium hits increased in 2012 (probably due in part to the drought); Santee Sioux joint TMDL for E. Coli on Bazile Cr; TMDLs approved for atrazine and E. Coli in Big Blue and for total phosphorus on Fremont Lakes;
 5. A change in fish advisory metrics (Mercury only) has occurred but NDEQ will continue PCB analyses where it's been detected in the past.
 - iii. Lake sampling will begin in a few days
 - iv. Beach monitoring to begin soon (51 beaches; 48 lakes);
 - v. Contracting w/ UNL
 1. Shell Creek bioassessment and Watershed plan w/ an emphasis on instream bmps
 2. Salt Valley Lake study on retention of sediments/nutrients
 3. Fremont Lakes sampling (UNL to use drones to do so; Dave Bubb may have to learn to fly) to go 1 more year; Hope to see what happens as biomass reaches its peak;
 4. Amy Bergin brown bag coming up at NDEQ on May 9, 2nd floor conf. room
 - vi. Connestoga lake renovation to begin in the fall
 - vii. Basin rotation: Niobrara basin this year; 40 stream sites; Putting in stream gages; Norfolk and Chadron field offices plus Upper Elkhorn NRD and Middle Niobrara NRD assistance; 13 of the 40 sites are regular ambient sites; Sampled weekly May-September; 35 Stream biological

network sites selected at random in the Niobrara; Haven't heard anything about Cornell Dam removal;

viii. Regular ambient sampling continues

c. NGPC:

- i. Alum treatments on Fremont Lakes assessment: Alum alone didn't change the nutrient conditions, but alum & fish renovation in tandem did improve the situation
- ii. Monitoring for invasive mussels will increase this year;
- iii. Admin wants to increase work on private streams/rivers

d. USACE

- i. 9 Mo R sites monitored monthly from Ft Randall to Rulo; 6 in cooperation w/ NDEQ; Bank grab sample during winter months; Depth integrated sampling during non-ice; Picking up composite samples at tributary confluences April to October; Intent to develop a water quality model for the Mo River ds of Gavins (contracting with the USACE-ERDC to develop the model – A HEC-Ras model that will get a water quality module); Model objective is to support interstate economic issues, EIS for habitat restoration efforts;
- ii. Salt/Papio sampling: Start sampling 2nd week of May; Veliger sampling; Samples to support modeling of Lake Zorinsky;

e. NDHHS:

- i. Not many challenges w/ SW systems so far this year;
- ii. Operator retention has been the challenge this year (Cedar/Knox and Crawford systems need operators if interested)
- iii. DEA drug take back event this Saturday (4/26) at several pharmacies around Nebraska (Google DEA Drug Take Back Event for more details, or go to http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html); In 2010, pharmacies were allowed to take back controlled substances, but no guidance, so DEA has taken the lead and will continue until more guidance is provided. Drugs get incinerated by certified incinerators; See attachment for more details

f. NDept of Ag:

- i. A policy is in development for addressing impaired streams and groundwater problem areas related to pesticides. It will go through internal review before being released.
- ii. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs calls for pesticide data all sources, including non-standard sources for the purposes of evaluating potential effects for pesticide registration review. If you know of some data non-public pesticide data (USGS NWIS; EPA Storet), let Craig know and he'll be able to forward you to the right contact. Calls for data come from EPA periodically, and will be forwarded to this committee. These data have made a difference in past cases of product registration;

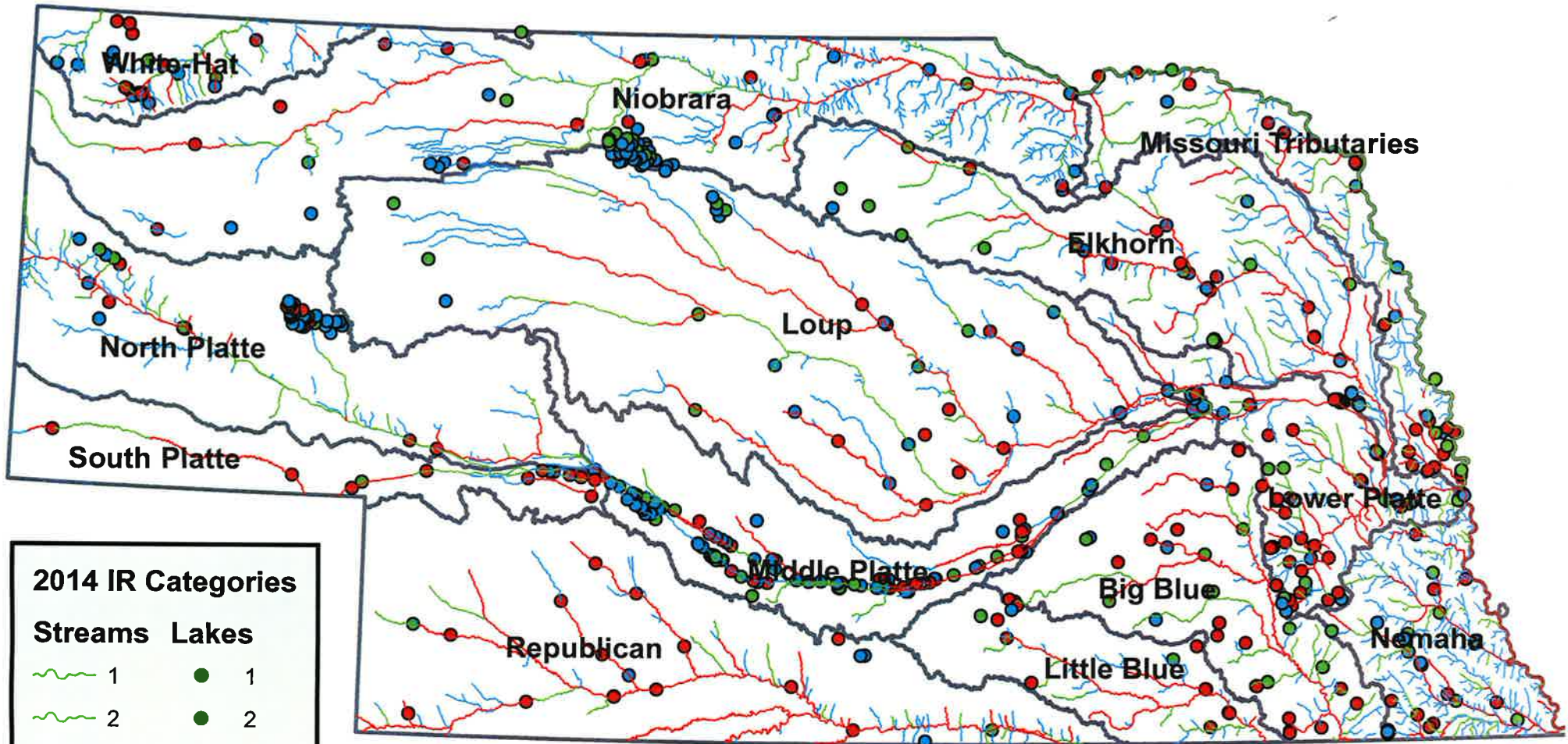
- g. LPSNRD:
 - i. Eastern NRDs are collaborating on collecting airborne geophysical data for aquifer characterization; In some cases it can show good interaction between ground and surface water;
 - ii. Restrictions on new well drilling becoming more common in eastern NRDs; Reports of springs going dry during the pumping season;
 - iii. LPSNRD Board just adopted a voluntary Integrated Management Plan – primarily for water quantity, but water quality is included
3. Group discussion about sharing data:
- a. Presentation by Dave Rus about two USGS data rescue efforts. See attachment
 - b. Update from Heather Bearnes about NDEQ data compilation efforts
 - i. NDEQ is moving their data into STORET; Using the WQX system to move newer data;
 - ii. 1976-1999 data are in STORET legacy db; Daniella got 2010-2012 into STORET; Heather is working on 2000-2009 conversion into STORET
 - iii. Heather will have 2013 data in STORET soon as well.
 - iv. NDEQ is producing 40,000 data points a year; Interns have a role in getting these data into the system, but the process is being improved and streamlined; Database managers that have field work experience are very valuable; New data are going in smoothly; The older data are the main hurdle;
 - v. Having data in STORET should reduce time spent on data requests
 - vi. Data collected in agreement w/ the USACE should already be in there via USACE efforts
 - c. USACE used to be putting the data into STORET, but it hasn't been going in recently because of admin privileges on a computer. They currently have an in-house database
 - d. Having a demonstration of how to retrieve agency data would be valuable; USGS data mentioned as an example;
4. NSWMC business
- a. Misc. announcements/information/discussion
 - i. Try to have this meeting closer to February/March next year to avoid field season conflicts
 - ii. Dave asked about potential water-quality opportunities related to Carlson's Water Sustainability bill: Expands NRC representation for prioritizing water projects; ~\$30M may start with projects already on the books; Water quantity is the primary purpose, but quality is mentioned (e.g. Omaha CSO program is included);
 - iii. Farm bill has a provision in it for partnerships between drinking water utilities and farmers for implementing bmps. See attachment
 - iv. Thompson Creek bio-blitz is coming in May. See attachment

- v. Some discussion about crowd-sourcing/volunteer monitoring for water quality: All tended to agree that the public awareness it creates for water quality is very valuable. There is some question about how the data that originate from these efforts fits into management decisions. Finding ways to capitalize on both the formal sampling that we do and the more informal sampling from volunteer monitoring will probably be important for stakeholders.
- vi. Groundwater Advisory Committee is meeting on 5/13 from 10-12 at NDEQ downtown.
- b. Chairperson elections:
 - i. Competition was fierce for the chair person seat.
 - ii. Dave Rus offered to continue in the role so long as we can get a speaker lined up during each preceding meeting or identify someone to help line up that speaker prior to the meeting.
 - 1. Mike Archer agreed to help line up the agenda for the next meeting.
- c. Next meeting tentatively set for Tuesday, October 28
 - i. This will be a joint meeting with the GW folks.
 - ii. Need to send an email to Dan Inman to inform him of this plan.

Attachments:

- 1. Integrated Report Map
- 2. Information about upcoming DEA Drug take-back event
- 3. USGS data rescue presentation
- 4. 2014 Farm bill: Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- 5. Thompson Creek bio-blitz flier

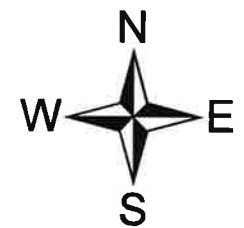
2014 Integrated Report Assessment Statuses



2014 IR Categories	
Streams	Lakes
1	1
2	2
3	3
4A	4A/R
4A/C	4C
4C	4R
5	5



Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
 Water Quality Division
 March 28, 2014



Attachment 2.

Hi Dave,

Here is the information about the DEA Drug Take-Back event this coming Saturday, April 26. [The link to the website is the most important bit.]

Got Drugs? This coming Saturday, April 26, local law enforcement and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) are sponsoring a prescription drug take-back event from 10 AM to 2 PM at a pharmacy near you. Please clean out your medicine cabinet and take expired, unused, or unwanted prescription (and over-the-counter) medications to a drop-off site for proper disposal. Getting these medications out of your home will help prevent accidental poisonings and abuse of prescription drugs, and will protect the environment and your drinking water from contamination. This event is free and anonymous, no questions asked. Canister inhalers and needles cannot be dropped off.

Please click on the link below, and then click on "Locate a Collection Site Near You" to find a participating pharmacy near you:

DEA.gov

Locations in the Lincoln/Lancaster County area include:

Walgreens at 1701 South Street, Lincoln
Russ's Super Market at 1550 S. Coddington Ave., Lincoln
Shopko at 6845 S. 27th Street, Lincoln
Hy-Vee at 5010 O Street, Lincoln
Walgreens at 4000 S. 70th Street, Lincoln
Walgreens at 2600 S. 48th Street, Lincoln
Lincoln Neighborhood Pharmacy at 6811 O Street, Lincoln
Walgreens at 2502 N. 48th Street, Lincoln
Walgreens at 8300 Northern Lights, Lincoln
Walgreens at 1404 Superior Street, Lincoln
Four Star Drug at 13851 Gulford Street, Waverly

Thanks for helping promote the event!

Elizabeth Esseks



Data Rescue?

- Sometimes data need to be rescued from old reports or databases so that the world can still use them.
- There are two major data-rescue efforts at the USGS that are expanding historical water-quality datasets
 - Old sediment data from the USACOE
 - Old chemistry data from the USGS



USCOE Sediment Data



- The Corps did a lot of work with sediment transport in the 1940-1970s
 - Daily values of sediment transport were published for many Nebraska sites under the title:

“Suspended Sediment in the Missouri River—Daily Record for Water Years 19__ - 19__”
 - Hard copies of suspended sediment results for many Nebraska samples were archived at a COE laboratory



USCOE Sediment Data



- In Nebraska, these sediment-sample data represented:
 - 8,489 samples
 - 8 different sites

Niobrara R nr Spencer	Big Papio at Ft Crook
Shell Cr at Platte Center	Salt Cr at Greenwood
Platte R at Louisville	Republican R at Bloomington
Republican R at Guide Rock	Big Blue R at Barneston

- 1947-1965



USCOE Sediment Data



- In Nebraska, these sediment daily values represented:
 - ~210 years of daily record
 - 20 different sites (listed on the next slide)
 - 1939-1974



USCOE Sediment Data



- Daily sediment data available for:

White R at Chadron	Little Papio at Irvington
Big Papio at Fort St	Papio at Giles Rd
Shell Cr at Platte Center	Platte R at Ashland
Salt Cr at Greenwood	Platte R at Louisville
Big Nemaha at Falls City	S Fk Republican at Benkelman
Republican R at Cambridge	Republican R at Orleans
Republican R at Harlan Cty Dam	Republican R at Bloomington
Republican R at Guide Rock	Lincoln Cr at Seward
W Fk Big Blue at Dorchester	Big Blue R at Crete
Turkey Cr at Wilber	Big Blue at Barneston



USCOE Sediment Data



- The USGS has recently scanned/transposed all of these data, given them basic QA checks, and made them available on their NWIS database
- There are lots of ways of getting the data out, but one uses the NWISMapper
 - Google: USGS NWIS Mapper

<http://maps.waterdata.usgs.gov/mapper/index.html>



USCOE Sediment Data



- From the start up screen, zoom to your area of interest



USCOE Sediment Data



- Pull up the Surface-Water Sites Menu



USGS

USCOE Sediment Data



- Select the type of site you're looking for

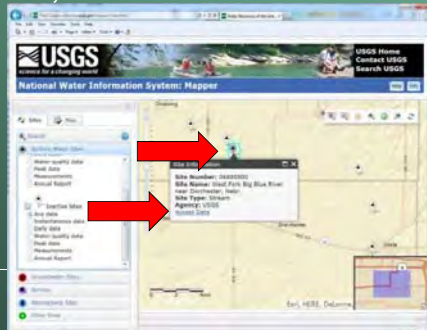


USGS

USCOE Sediment Data



- Click on the site, then the "Access Data" link



USGS

USCOE Sediment Data



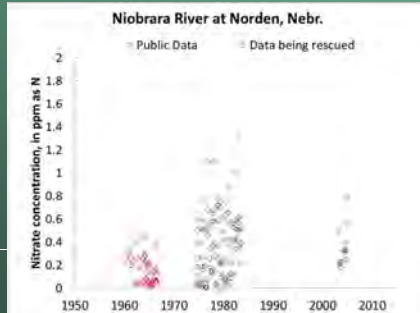
- Are your data in the inventory?

AVAILABLE DATA:	Data Type	Begin Date	End Date	Count
Current & Historical Observations				
Discharge, gages best per second				
		1960-08-01	2014-04-16	22647
	Suspended sediment concentration, milligrams per liter	1960-10-01	1963-09-30	1328
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1960-10-01	1963-09-30	1820
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1963-10-01	1973-09-30	2104
Data Abstraction				
	Discharge, gages best per second	1974-08-01	2013-04-30	19937
	Suspended sediment concentration, milligrams per liter	1960-10-01	1973-09-30	1828
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1960-10-01	1973-09-30	1828
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1973-10-01	1973-09-30	2104
Monthly Abstraction				
	Discharge, gages best per second	1960-10	2013-04	1993
	Suspended sediment concentration, milligrams per liter	1960-10	1973-09	1828
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1960-10	1973-09	1828
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1973-10	1973-09	2104
Annual Abstraction				
	Discharge, gages best per second	1960	2013	1993
	Suspended sediment concentration, milligrams per liter	1960	1973	1828
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1960	1973	1828
	Suspended sediment discharge, tons per day	1973	1973	2104
	Peak Abstraction	1960-10-10	2013-04-10	14
	Peak Abstraction	1973-10-10	2013-04-10	14
	Peak Abstraction	1973-05-01	2000-08-09	563
Additional Data Sources				
	Estimated Data Archive	1960-10-01	2007-09-29	11792

USGS

USGS Chemistry Data

- Niobrara River near Norden, Nebr.



USGS Chemistry Data

- The rescue plan
 - Data are going through quality-assurance testing
 - Intend to make the viable data available by the end of the calendar year



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Agricultural Act of 2014: Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Sec. 1271 of the Farm Bill)

Overview: The 2014 Farm Bill establishes a new conservation program, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), designed to support partnerships between farmers and non-farming entities to tackle various conservation and environmental issues on a regional scale. RCPP replaces four existing conservation programs: the Agricultural Enhancement Program, Chesapeake Bay watershed program, the Great Lakes program for soil erosion and sediment control, and the cooperative conservation partnership initiative.

The RCPP specifically calls out municipal water and wastewater utilities as eligible entities to form regional partnerships with farmers and provides an excellent opportunity for interested utilities to implement innovative nutrient management solutions with agricultural non-point sources to improve local water quality. The RCPP can provide utilities with a potential alternative for addressing nutrient-related water quality challenges in a more affordable manner by working with local farmers to install nutrient management practices upstream rather than installing more treatment technology at the plant, and accessing U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds for support. Partnering organizations must have the operational capacity to undertake a RCPP project initiative and be able to implement the project over multiple years. However, for utilities that serve a large urbanized area located in a watershed predominantly impaired by agricultural nutrient run-off, the RCPP offers a promising new mechanism to address water quality issues comprehensively and on a watershed basis.

NACWA anticipates that the USDA will begin the implementation process shortly after Congress enacts the legislation, possibly issuing a call for applications before the end of the year.

Purpose: A key purpose of the RCPP is to support collaborations between farmers and non-farming entities, including municipal water and wastewater utilities, to undertake conservation activities on working farms in order to meet or avoid the need for national, State, and local natural resource regulatory requirements.

Partnerships: The RCPP relies upon partnerships between eligible entities and multiple agricultural producers through which USDA conservation funding programs can be used to implement best management practices.

Partnership Agreements: Partnership agreements between eligible partners and producers are used as a form of contract between the parties and specify duties of a partnering organization. Specifically, a partnership agreement defines the scope of the project, lists eligible activities to be implemented; designates the agricultural lands and geographic area covered; and, explains the planning, outreach, implementation and assessment activities to be conducted.

Additional responsibilities of eligible partners include: conducting outreach and education to producers for potential participation in the program; assisting producers to apply for assistance, if requested; leveraging financial or technical assistance; assessing project effectiveness; and, reporting results.

Priority Applications: The USDA Secretary may prioritize applications that assist producers in meeting or avoiding the need for a natural resource regulatory requirement; have a high percentage of producers in the area covered by the agreement; significantly leverage non-Federal financial and technical resources and coordinate with other local, State, or national efforts; deliver high percentages of applied conservation to address conservation priorities or regional, State, or national conservation initiatives; and, provide innovation in conservation methods and delivery, including outcome-based performance measures or methods.

Funding Assistance: Several sources of program funds are available, including monies available specifically for RCPP implementation and program funds available through existing USDA conservation programs referred to as “covered programs” under the Act: the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, and the Healthy Forests Reserve Program. In addition, the Secretary can provide special five-year payments to “producers participating in projects that address water quality concerns and in an amount sufficient to encourage adoption of conservation practices and systems that improve nutrient management.”

Available funding for conservation activities goes directly to agricultural producers undertaking the conservation practices - a partnering organization cannot receive funding directly but can leverage this funding with other non-federal funds.

Critical Conservation Areas: The Secretary is required to allocate a minimum amount of funding each year to applications and projects located in designated “Critical Conservation Areas”, such as projects within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the Great Lakes watershed or the Mississippi River basin.

Looking Ahead: While the RCPP attempts to address a variety of natural resource issues, water quality and nutrient management issues factor high on the priority list as areas of concern for congressional drafters and will likely play a dominant role in program implementation. Program elements such as prioritizing projects that help farmers avoid potential regulatory requirements and provide for outcome-based performance measures; enabling the Secretary to provide special payments over five years to producers undertaking nutrient management activities; and, targeting funds to critical conservation areas that would benefit from water quality improvement all suggest that water quality concerns will likely be a top conservation priority for RCPP partnership agreements. In addition to these program elements, the fact that municipal water and wastewater utilities are specifically called out as eligible partners indicates that fostering collaborations around water quality issues will be a paramount program objective.

NACWA will monitor the implementation of the program and provide information to its members as developments occur. For more information, contact Patricia Sinicropi, NACWA Legislative Director at psinicropi@nacwa.org.



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La Vista BioBlitz



Saturday, May 17
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Central Park (Edgewood Blvd., north of Giles Rd.)

Experience Nature Up Close and Personal!

A great event for families! La Vista's Thompson Creek will be the backdrop for this event featuring:

- Booths
- Demonstrations
- Interactive Workshops
- Hands-on children's activities and more!

Guided tours of the creek will be given by regional experts in biology, ecology and other disciplines.

Come for a short time or spend all day!

Brought to you by the Nebraska Watershed Network.

Schedule of Events:

For Kids:

- **CAPOW from UNO**
CAPOW! offers action packed, science themed demonstrations. Depending on the show, observers could "Science Wizards" with lightning from their fingertips, bananas being used to drive nails, and other chemistry, physics, and demonstrations.
- **Water Rocks!**
"Water Rocks! presents the Conservation Station—a mobile learning center that educates audiences of all ages about the importance of good soil and water quality." Interactive activities include a rainfall simulator to learn about erosion and water quality, as well as other hands-on activities.
- **Omaha Masquerade**
Professional face painters will provide free face painting for kids of all ages.

- **Joslyn Art Museum**
The Joslyn will provide a display of art work from the Museum's collection that relates to the event, and provide materials and guidance for visitors interested in drawing what they find at Thompson Creek.
- **Lauritzen Gardens**
La Vista Bio Blitz specific programming still being developed
- **The Zoo Academy**
Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium's Zoo Academy... La Vista Bio Blitz specific programming still being developed
- **Omaha Children's Museum**
The Children's museum will provide several interactive activities. These include fun with never Wet Rustoleum-covered suit where audience volunteers can try on the suit and have their friends spray them with various liquids and watch it run off! Participants can also explore with Sensory tables using Never Wet Sand and various water toys, help construct a giant lava lamp out of everyday materials, see fireproof water balloons, and see dry ice experiments.

For Adults:

- **Nebraska Wildlife Federation**
The NWF will provide 30-45 minute workshops scheduled at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and noon. Topics include water chemistry, creek organisms, and watershed ecology.
- Rain Garden and Rain Barrel Demonstrations
Learn more about the City of La Vista's Rain Barrel Cost Share Program!

For the whole family!

Guided tours of Thompson Creek given by regional experts in biology, ecology and related disciplines. These will be offered throughout the day.

Booths and Demonstrations from:

- Thompson Creek Restoration Project
- Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District
- Nebraska Environmental Trust
- Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Office
- Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance
- Daugherty Water for Food Institute and The Kaneko

UNO:

- Nebraska Watershed Network
- Aquatic Toxicology Lab
- Service Learning Academy
- Office of STEM Education

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