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Winter 2020
Volume 34, Issue 1

Tri-Basin Topics

A quarterly publication of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District

South Central Water Conference February 6, 2020

The 2020 South Central Water Conference will be held Thursday, February 6 at the Phelps County Ag Center. Join us for coffee and doughnuts at 9:30 a.m. Sessions will begin at 10:00 a.m. The conference is free of charge and a lunch will be provided for those attending. The program should conclude by 3 p.m. A full agenda for the event will be posted at www.tribasinnrd.org as soon as it is available.

The conference is sponsored by Tri-Basin Natural Resources District, Lower Republican Natural Resources District, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, UNL Extension, and Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce. It is a joint effort to increase the public's understanding of water-related issues in Nebraska. Topics this year will include UNL TAPS program, Harlan County Lake levels, 2020 Weather Outlook, and Water Resources Updates from local agencies.

Area agri-businesses will display their products and services at the water conference and will have representatives on hand to visit with conference participants.

Producers in Tri-Basin NRD's Phase II or Phase III Groundwater Quality Management Areas can sign in to receive nitrogen management recertification credit for attending the conference.

Keynote Speaker:
Jeff Fassett, Director of Nebraska DNR

Other speakers at this year's conference include:

Chuck Burr, UNL Extension

Patricio Grassini, UNL Extension

Bryson Hellmuth, US Army Corps of Engineers

Tyler Williams, UNL Extension

Nolan Little, TBNRD

Scott Dicke, LRNRD

Tyler Thulin, CNPPID

Craig Scott, US Bureau of Reclamation

The Tri-Basin NRD Conservation Tree Program is underway!
(See enclosed information.)

Contact Tri-Basin NRD or your local NRCS office for information about planting a windbreak or shelterbelt.

"Dedicated to Conservation of our Natural Resources"

http://www.tribasinnrd.org

Manager's Message

by John Thorburn

The Tri-Basin NRD Water Conservation Incentive Program (WCIP) is intended to address three groundwater management issues: ensuring sustainability of groundwater supplies, protecting streamflows from diminishment due to groundwater pumping and improving groundwater quality in Gosper, Phelps and Kearney counties. The goal of this voluntary program is to reduce groundwater pumping and increase irrigation water use efficiency in Tri-Basin NRD. Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD) launched the Water Conservation Incentive Program (WCIP) earlier this year for groundwater irrigators.

In 2020 the TBNRD is expanding the program to encourage irrigators with both surface water turnouts and groundwater wells (commingled parcels) to use canal water rather than pump groundwater. This will reduce the amount of groundwater that is pumped and increase groundwater recharge in the area.

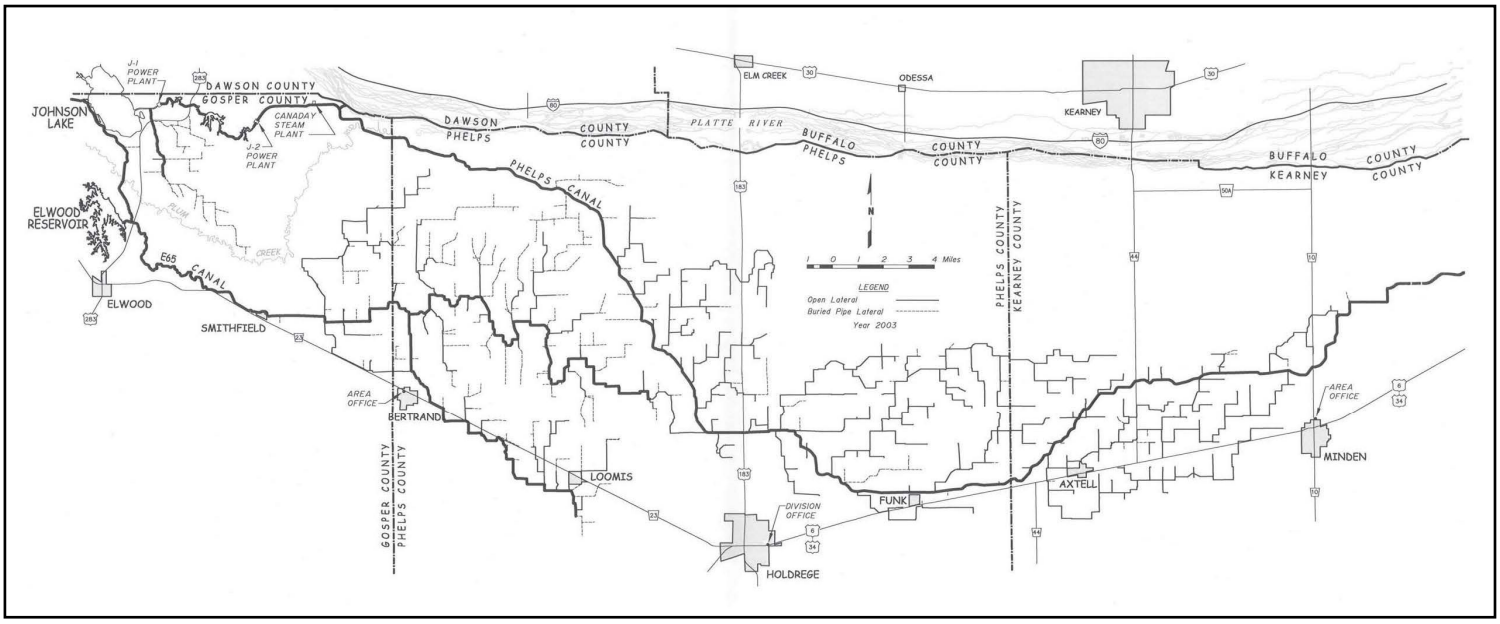
TBNRD will offer five-year contracts to CNPPID customers and landowners who have individual surface water rights. Because NRD funds are limited, a maximum of 8000 acres in contracts can be approved. Individual landowners will be limited to enrolling a total of no more than 320 acres in the WCIP. If applications exceed the number of acres allowed for enrollment, applications will be selected for approval using a ranking system. Applications from landowners with flowmeters currently in place will be favored.

The enrollment period opened October 25, 2019, and runs through March 31, 2020. Once the enrollment limit is reached, water savings to the district could reach 7500 acre-feet per year.

This new option is an addition to our existing WCIP, which is focused on groundwater users. Incentives in the groundwater user portion of this program will likely be most attractive to landowners in phase two and phase three groundwater quantity management areas, so the water-use reductions should be greatest where the need is greatest (there are approximately 30,000 certified irrigated acres in Tri-Basin's phase two and phase three townships).

In exchange for their participation, landowners will be paid up to $5 for the equivalent of one acre-inch of water credit per acre per year, with the opportunity to sell additional credits to the NRD at a set price. In addition to NRD purchases, landowners will have the opportunity to sell water credits on the open market at any agreed-upon price (private transactions require NRD board approval). Tri-Basin will maintain an "electronic bulletin board" to facilitate connections between buyers and sellers. Landowners will also be granted flexibility to irrigate any acres within enrolled parcels and to share (pool) allocations between parcels. Pooling agreements will be required to enable sharing allocations between parcels under different ownership.

Landowners and irrigators can find out more specific information about Tri-Basin NRD's Water Conservation Incentive Program by visiting our website: www.tribasinnrd.org.



Chemigation Renewals

Tri-Basin NRD will be sending out renewal forms to producers who had chemigation permits last year. Those producers whose chemigation certification has expired will need to attend one of the chemigation training sessions held in February and March. Dates and locations for classes within the TBNRD can be found on our website at www.tribasinnrd.org. For more information about other dates and locations, call your county Extension Office.

Chemigation renewal permits are due in the Tri-Basin NRD office before **June 1, 2020**.

TBNRD Trees Honor District Newborns

Tri-Basin NRD offers parents of newborns in the district the gift of a seedling tree. These trees are available to the family of any child born in Gosper, Phelps or Kearney Counties since the previous tree season (April 2019). You can reserve a baby tree by calling our office at (308) 995-6688 or 1-877-995-6688 or by emailing the baby's name, birthdate, parents' names, address and phone number to nmunter@tribasinnrd.org. We will send you a postcard in April letting you know when and where to pick up your tree. If you have any questions, please call our office and ask for Nate.

Grant Township Water Use

Producers with irrigated crop ground in Grant Township (5N-13W) in eastern Kearney County should have flowmeters installed on all irrigation wells by December 31, 2021. Cost share may be available, so check with your local NRCS office to apply.

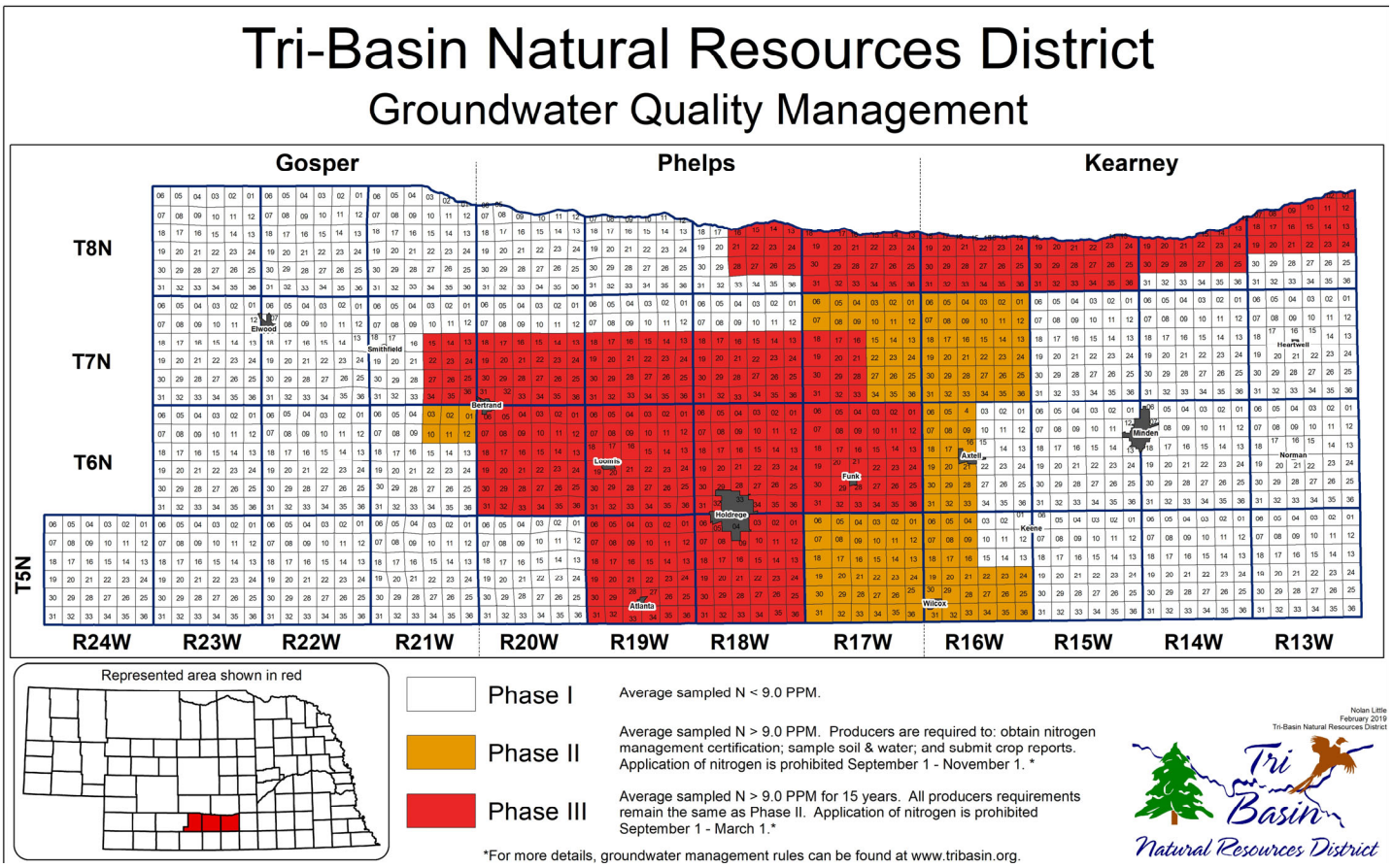
Nitrogen Reports Due

Nitrogen Management Reports for the 2019 crop year were due December 31, 2019. If you have fields in the Phase II or Phase III areas of the Groundwater Quality Management Area and have not turned in your reports, please do so as soon as possible. If you need forms or help filling them out, contact the TBNRD office.

Nitrogen Management Certification Reminders

The Groundwater Quality Management Areas established by Tri-Basin NRD have allowed district staff to work cooperatively with farmers and agronomists for more than 25 years to help improve the timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness of fertilizer application. These efforts have resulted in stable or declining nitrate-nitrogen levels in groundwater supplies throughout much of the district, thus safeguarding the quality of our groundwater.

Producers in Phase II and Phase III areas of the Groundwater Quality Management Area need to take soil samples this winter and water samples in Summer 2020. Current Nitrogen Management certification is required. Producers whose certification has expired will receive notification, along with a list of training dates, in the mail in January. Training dates have been posted on our website, www.tribasinnrd.org. Attendance at the South Central Water Conference on February 6 also qualifies for Nitrogen Management Certification (be sure to sign in for credit).



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Tri-Basin Topics

Winter 2020

Non-Profit Permit
U. S. Postage
PAID
Holdrege, NE 68949
Permit No. 220

Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
1723 Burlington St. Holdrege, NE 68949
(308) 995-6688
email: tribasin@tribasinnrd.org
www.tribasinnrd.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nebraska's NRDs: Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future

CALENDAR

January 14 ..... NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*

January 20 ... NRD Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 6 ..... South Central Water Conference

February 11 ..... NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*

February 17 ..... NRD Closed for Presidents' Day

March 10 ..... NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*

April 14 ..... NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

April 29-30 ..... Water Jamboree

* Times are tentative. All meetings are at TBNRD office in Holdrege unless otherwise noted.

TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Olsen, Chairman ..... Minden, NE
Bradley Lundeen, Vice Chairman ..... Wilcox, NE
Joe Bilka, Treasurer ..... Holdrege, NE
Todd Garrelts, Secretary ..... Holdrege, NE
Brian Bergstrom ..... Axtell, NE
Mike Cavanaugh ..... Minden, NE
Ed Harris ..... Loomis, NE
Robin Hinrichs ..... Axtell, NE
Phyllis Johnson ..... Bertrand, NE
Greg Jorgensen ..... Minden, NE
Joe Larson ..... Loomis, NE
David Raffety ..... Kearney, NE
Larry Reynolds ..... Lexington, NE

TRI-BASIN NRD STAFF

Amy Dutton ..... Minden Office Secretary
Tammy Fahrenbruch ..... Water Programs Coordinator
Lori Hagan ..... Office Clerk
Sasha Hahn ..... Information & Education Coordinator
Nolan Little ..... Water Resources Manager
Carie Lynch ..... Administrative Secretary
Nate Munter ..... Land Resources Coordinator
Patrick Nott ..... Water Resources Technician
Nancy Pemberton ..... Elwood Office Secretary
Tami Reese ..... Holdrege Office Secretary
Dalton Refior ..... Land Resources Technician
Esther Smith ..... Office Assistant
John Thorburn ..... General Manager
Jeff VanEperen ..... Water Resources Technician

A mailing list is maintained and requests to be placed on the list should be sent to the above address. Comments and suggestions may be addressed to the General Manager.

Get Tri-Basin Topics in your inbox instead of your mailbox!

To request an electronic version of this newsletter, send an email shahn@tribasinnrd.org.

TRI-BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
2020 HAND PLANT ORDER FORM

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

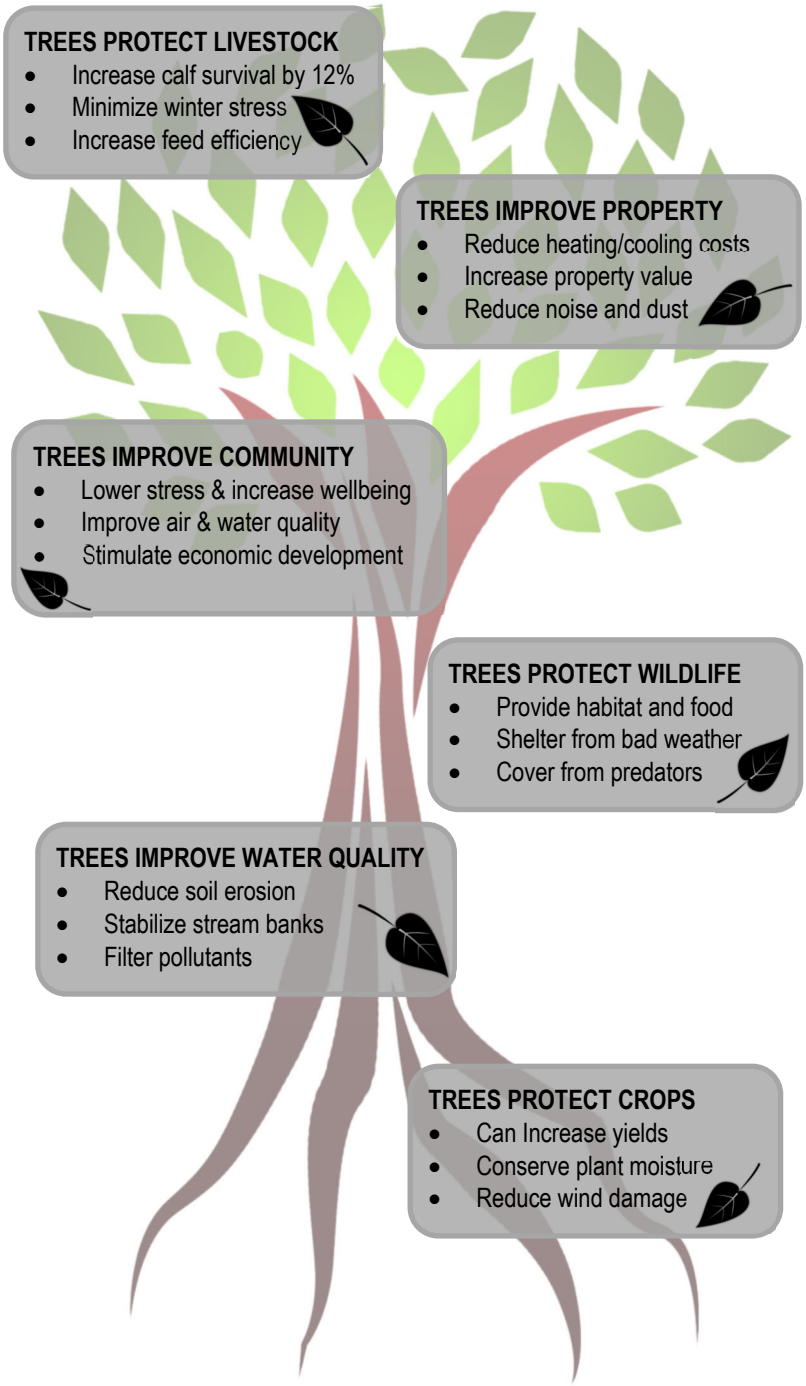
ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____ PHONE: _____

ORDERS MUST BE IN MULTIPLES OF 25.

Tree Order Deadline is April 1, 2020.

QUANTITY	SPECIES
	CONIFERS
	AUSTRIAN PINE
	COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE
	PONDEROSA PINE
	RED CEDAR (Eastern)
	NORWAY SPRUCE
	BROADLEAFS
	BLACK WALNUT
	BUR OAK
	HACKBERRY
	RED OAK
	SWAMP WHITE OAK
	HONEYLOCUST
	SHRUBS
	AMERICAN PLUM
	COTONEASTER
	CHOKECHERRY
	ELDERBERRY
	GOLDEN CURRANT
	LILAC
	SAND CHERRY
	SKUNKBUSH SUMAC
	Total # of Trees
	Multiply total # of trees x .85
	Mulch x .35/foot
	Staples x .15
	Subtotal
	Tax (Holdrege 7%, Minden 7.5%, Elwood 6.5%)
	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE/PAID



Tree Pickup will be at: _____ Tri-Basin NRD _____ Minden NRCS _____Elwood NRCS

WHY PLANT A WINDBREAK?

Windbreaks and shelterbelts provide many benefits. Windbreaks planted along field boundaries reduce soil erosion by reducing wind velocity. Shelterbelts planted around farmsteads reduce heating costs in homes and shop buildings. Shelterbelts can protect livestock from blizzards and serve as "living snow fences." Trees and shrubs also provide food, shelter and nesting habitat for many species of birds and mammals.

NRD TREE & SHRUB PLANTINGS

Contact the NRD Office or your county NRCS for help with determining the type and number of trees and shrubs you need. The technician will make arrangements for the tree order and planting service. The NRD will plant the trees according to the plan.

Trees are planted in the spring as soon as conditions are suitable. The NRD tree planting crew will notify landowners of the approximate date and time of planting.

SITE PREPARATION

Good site preparation is a key to rapid tree growth and survival. The best site preparation begins the year before the trees are planted. On heavier soils, working the ground to kill competing vegetation is an excellent method of preparing the site. The technician assisting in planning a windbreak or habitat plot can advise you about the type of site preparation needed. The technician can also help you determine if herbicide carryover will be a problem.

WEED CONTROL

Weed control in the form of plastic mulch is available through the district. This woven material is installed over the trees after planting. Slots are then cut for the trees. Plastic mulch not only eliminates weeds but also helps to preserve soil moisture.

PRICES

Trees & Shrubs	$0.85 each/multiples of 25

PLANTING SERVICE

Tree planting (no mulch)	$0.50/ft
Trees, tree planting, mulch and mulch installation	$1.75/ft
Drip tape	$0.25/ft
Drip tape set-up	Minimum $35.00
Pull-in Charge	$50.00
Renovations*	$250.00
Shrub thickets*	$300.00

Minimum 500 foot per planting

Plastic Mulch (Material Only)	$0.35 per ft
Stakes	$0.15 each
Seedling Tubes	$1.10 each

Prices are subject to change.

*Contact Tri-Basin NRD for site review.

PLANTING YOUR OWN TREES

You can order trees and shrubs at the NRD or your local NRCS Office. Orders must be in multiples of 25 per species. We will send you a postcard when your trees arrive. We also have tree spades available to rent.

DRIP TAPE

Tri-Basin has subsurface "drip tape" available for watering trees planted by the District. The water source could be a portable tank or a hydrant. Check with the TBNRD Land Resource Coordinator for more information.

COST-SHARE

Tri-Basin NRD offers cost-share funds for tree plantings and plastic mulch installation. You should apply at your county NRCS office before March 1.

All sites must be properly prepared before planting to qualify for cost-share. Reimbursement is made only after full payment is received. The minimum total cost of plantings eligible for cost-share is $500.

Cost-share may also be available from your county USDA office. Pheasants Forever and Nebraska Game & Parks Commission also offer programs for wildlife habitat improvement. NRCS staff can help you determine which programs have funds available and best suit your needs.

BILLING ON NRD PLANTINGS

Tri-Basin NRD bills for trees/tree planting service after completion. Full payment is due upon receipt of the billing. Cost-share payments will not be made until payment is received at the Tri-Basin or NRCS office.