



Upper Loup Scoop

Upper Loup NRD

October 2021

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Calendar of Events

October

14 Board Meeting: ULNRD Office @ 7 pm CT

11 Columbus Day: Office closed

November

11 Veteran's Day: Office closed

11 Board Meeting: ULNRD Office @ 7 pm CT

25-26 Thanksgiving: Office closed

December

9 Board Meeting: ULNRD Office @ 3 pm CT

25 Christmas: Office closed

Diamond Bar Ranch Awarded Tree Planter of the Year Award

During the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts annual conference, Robert Jones of Diamond Bar Ranch was awarded the 2021 Tree Planter of the Year conservation award. Jones attended the banquet with his wife Susanne and daughter Natalie where he was able to personally accept his award from the Association.



The Upper Loup NRD nominated the Jones family for this award due to their consistent dedication to planting trees to create new windbreaks, and improve existing windbreaks to protect their livestock from harsh weather conditions. They also implement trees to slow down soil erosion from the high water table around their area.

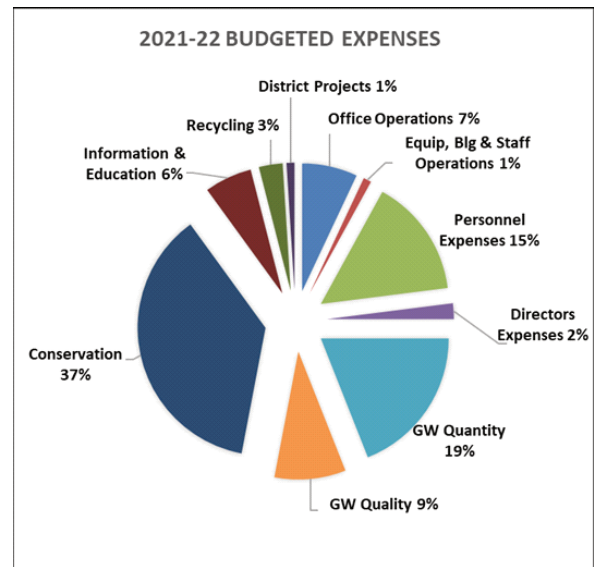
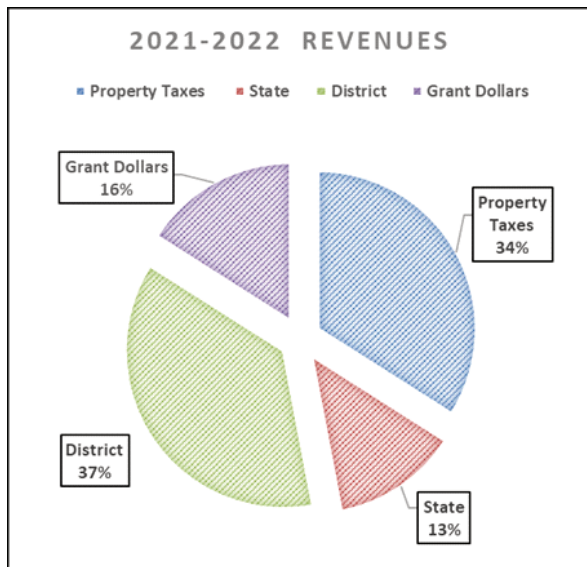
Since 2000, they have planted anywhere from 1,000 to 5,500 trees per year bringing their overall planting total to over 31,690 trees in 21 years. They have also utilized a combination of species in their windbreaks to promote diversity and additional strength to their breaks such as Eastern Red Cedar, Rocky Mountain Juniper, Ponderosa Pine, as well as a variety of hardwoods and shrubs.

We are extremely proud to have been able to nominate the Jones family for this conservation award and we are certain they will continue their wonderful work.

Soil Testing

Soil testing is an important diagnostic tool to evaluate nutrient imbalances, understand plant growth, and optimize crop production. Management of soil also protects our environment from pollutants of improper fertilization such as excess phosphorus and nitrogen. Information gathered from routinely testing soil health will provide various benefits including crop and profit yield increases. The Upper Loup NRD has a cost share program to help land owners defray part of the costs associated with testings. You can find the application on our website or stop by our office.

2021-2022 Budget



The Upper Loup Board of Directors adopted the budget for fiscal year 2021-2. This year's budget calls for a property tax levy of .013529 (1.3 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation). NRD's have the option to levy up to 4.5 cents per 100 dollars of valuation to aid in fulfilling all their statutory responsibilities, which we are well below. With the help of grants and product sales the Upper Loup has been able to provide a wide variety of services including water quality testing, conservation practices, wildlife habitat improvement, soil sampling, noxious weed control, recycling, yard enhancement, and camp scholarships to name just a few. NRD budget asking is down 16% from last year, the levy rate is down 20% from last year and our percent of budget attributed to tax dollars is down 3% to 34%. from last year, meaning less than half of our total budget is supported by tax dollars.

Fall is the Time to Start Tree Planning

Trees provide important benefits such as, protecting homes and livestock from wind and snow, helping to reduce heating and cooling costs, preventing soil erosion, and also providing wildlife habitat. The Upper Loup NRD offers tree program services including: planning, planting, weed barrier installation or weed control, and drip irrigation.

Fall is a good time to think about tree planning. The ULNRD provides a 50% cost share along with free tree planning services. Trees and shrubs, planting, weed mulch, and drip irrigation systems are all eligible for the cost share program.

Hefty Energy Bags and their Unique End Products

You can find plastic packaging just about anywhere; chip bags, candy wrappers, etc. Typically, these items are difficult to recycle due to the small size and effects they may have on recycling machinery. Rather than these items being sent off to the landfill, Hefty Energy Bags were created to collect single use plastics such as utensils, snack bags, grocery sacks, and similar items and process it into raw material for various uses.

After collecting materials, products can be transformed into energy resources used to fuel cement kilns, converted into concrete aggregate for cement production, or ground into smaller pieces used to make new products including construction materials.

We have one of these unique operations in our own state of Nebraska. First Star Fiber of Omaha is currently processing Energy Bags for end market materials. As a reminder, once full these bags can be placed directly inside of your local plastic recycling trailer.

Jr High Field Day Held in August



On August 25th, a field day was held in Thedford at the NRD office for District 8th graders. It was a great turnout with around 50 kids in attendance from Dunning, Hyannis, Mullen, Thedford, and Stapleton schools. Students were able to learn about natural resources such as water, range, forestry, soils, wildlife and recycling during our field day with various hands on activities presented by volunteers from the North Platte NRCS, Thedford NRCS, Pheasants Forever, USGS, and Upper Loup NRD staff.

Youths were able to calculate stream flow with Chris Hobza (USGS) at the river, learn about soil health with Chuck Markley (NRCS), try their hand at identifying native grasses with JuliAnn Shaeffer (NRCS), construct water rockets with ULNRD staff Lexi Spurlin while discussing recycling, tree and shrub identification in the arboretum with ULNRD staff Shane Young, and finally discuss wildlife and recreational funding with Zachary Brewer (Pheasants Forever).

New Drill Available for Rent

There are many benefits when it comes to using a no-till technique such as reduction of soil erosion, soil moisture and organic matter retention, protection of groundwater quality, reduction of chemical runoff, and reducing soil compaction.

With the help of funding through a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, a 15 foot Great Plains No Till Drill is now available for rent through the ULNRD in addition to our 10 foot drill. The pricing for the 15 foot drill is \$10.00/acre plus tax, and the 10 foot is \$8.00/acre plus tax. Please contact our office for more information on renting availability.



Enter the NACD Poster Contest

The National Association of Conservation Districts has begun their 2021 poster contest. This competition is for Kindergarten through 12th grade students in either public schools or who are home schooled. The goal is to create a poster that highlights the work of conservation districts that protect and enhance natural resources. This year's theme is **Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities**. Students are asked to reflect on this message and create a piece of artwork that depicts what this means to them and their community. Individuals who participate have the opportunity to win monetary prizes for their submitted works. The deadline to submit your poster to the ULNRD is **Wednesday, November 10th**. For more information on the contest, entry forms, or rules please contact Lexi at our office.



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ULNRD Board of Directors

Sub-District 1

Eric Storer

Rebecca Connealy

Sub-District 2

Judy Ridenour

John Kraye

Sub-District 3

Chris Higgins

Miles Maseberg

Sub-District 4

Tony Ruhter

Eric Schipporeit

Sub-District 5

Tom Johnson

Richard Burnside

At Large

Patrick Wright

Cherry	Cherry	Cherry	Brown
1	2	3	4
Grant	Hooker	Thomas	Blaine
	McPherson	5	Logan

For latest news check out
www.upperlounprd.org

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TO: POSTAL CUSTOMER

Flowmeter Reading

Jake, Shane and Lexi will be out reading flowmeters. You will recognize them by the white pickup with the Upper Loup NRD emblem on the side. Weather permitting, all readings shall be completed by January 1.