

Spring 2012
Volume 26, Issue 2

Tri-Basin Topics

A quarterly publication of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District

Republican Basin IMP Public Hearing Set for April 10

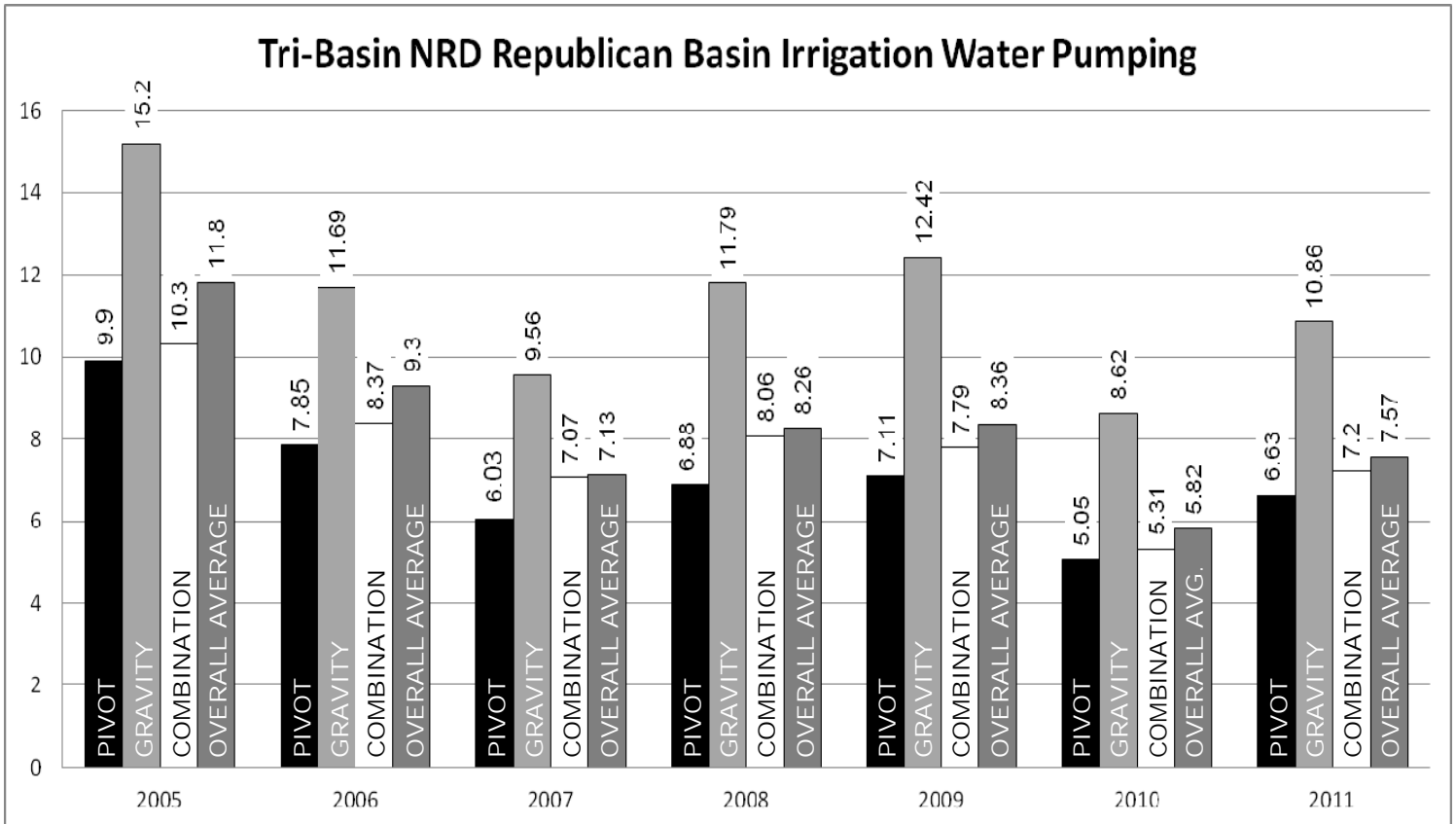
Tri-Basin NRD directors will hold a hearing to accept public comment on the current draft of the Republican Basin Integrated Management Plan (IMP) just prior to the April board of directors meeting. The hearing will start at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10 at the Tri-Basin NRD office at 1723 Burlington Street in Holdrege. Representatives from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) will be at the hearing as well. The regular April board meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

The IMP is a joint effort of Tri-Basin NRD and NDNR to "sustain a balance between water uses and water supplies so that the economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District are assured for both the short

term and long term." The plan maps out goals and objectives through which Tri-Basin NRD can achieve and sustain a hydrologically "balanced" condition so that Tri-Basin NRD water users will not cause a net depletion to streamflow in Republican River tributaries that originate within the district.

Written comments about the IMP may be sent to the attention of John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD's General Manager, at 1723 Burlington Street, Holdrege, NE 68949. Written comments may also be submitted by email to Thorburn's attention at tribasin@tribasinprd.org.

A copy of Tri-Basin NRD's draft Republican Basin Integrated Management Plan can be viewed on the district's website, www.tribasinprd.org.





Manager's Message

by John Thorburn

“Special” Trees Need Care

I hope that, over the course of this long, cold winter, you have taken time to think about your trees (past, present and future). Now is the time to begin put those thoughts into action. Before you take action, however, you need inspiration and motivation. Think about the role that trees played in your childhood.

I remember a big cottonwood in the tree grove down the road from my house. My friends and I begged and borrowed lumber to build a tree fort in it. That fort became our headquarters, where we planned adventures of all sorts, real and imaginary. I remember eating mulberries until I was sick to my stomach (more than once). I remember throwing crabapples, whipping weeping willow limbs and climbing high up in my neighbor's birch.

Is there a special tree in your past? Was it a place to play? Did it have a tire swing? Was it the base for games of tag? Or did its strength and beauty simply make a lasting impression on you?

Regardless what makes trees special to us, most trees in Nebraska have one thing in common. Someone planted them and cared for them. Nebraska does have native trees, but our state was predominantly grassland before the arrival of white settlers. One of our state's earliest nicknames was the “Tree Planter State.”

Now that you are inspired with thoughts of trees past, you need to turn your attention to your existing trees. Most homeowners have one or more trees in their yards. Do your trees have damaged branches? Do they have low branches that get in your way? Do they simply look funny, because they are lop-sided or misshapen? If you answered yes to any of these questions, its time to do some pruning. When it is done well, pruning not only improves the appearance of trees, it strengthens them and extends their lifespan.

Late winter is the ideal time to prune trees and most shrubs. When pruning, cut branches back to the limb

“collar” if at all possible. The collar is the bulge around the base of a tree branch. If you cut just outside of the collar, the tree bark will grow over the wound quickly. If you leave a stub sticking out, the bark has to grow over the stub before it can close the wound. Unhealed wounds provide an opportunity for insects and disease to take hold on a tree. It is also best to cut branches while they are still small, if possible, because small wounds heal rapidly.

Some people think that they can help trees by fertilizing them. This is not generally a good idea. Fertilizer will encourage trees to grow faster, but fast-growing trees have weaker structures that are more susceptible to wind damage and drought. On the other hand, some trees can be

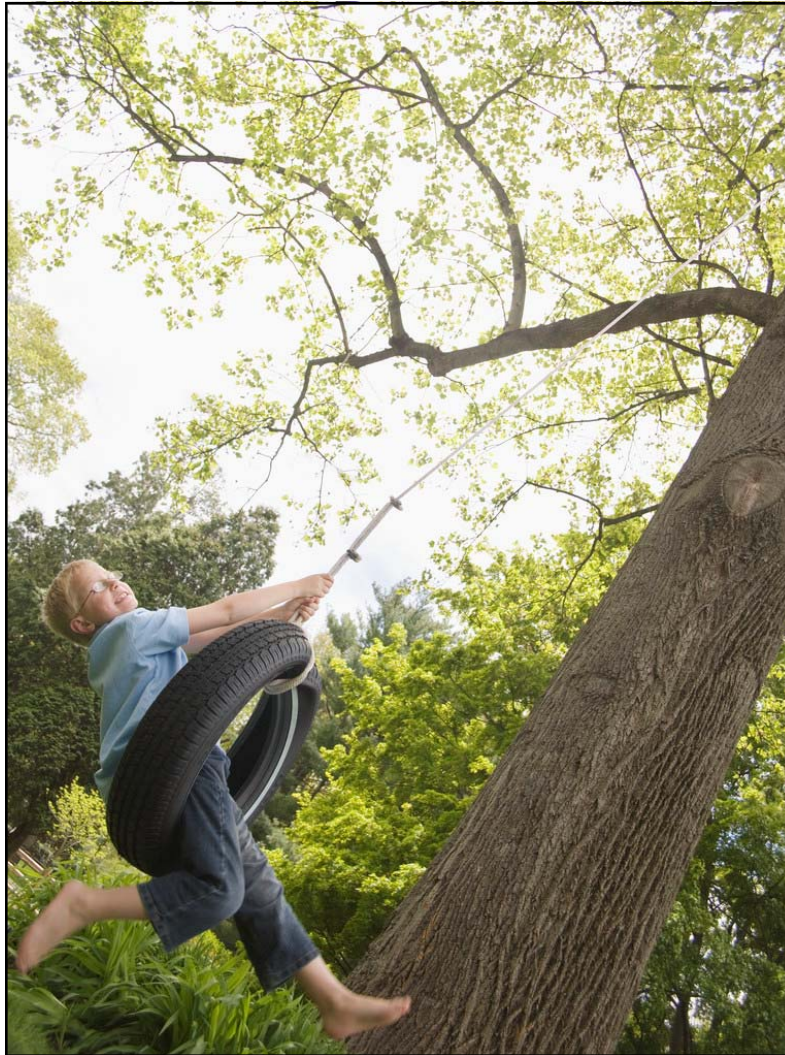
helped by soil amendments. Pines, oaks and maples benefit from regular applications of iron. Soil acidifiers help young conifers get established by lowering soil pH.

If you have pruned and cared for your established trees, all that is left for you to do is to plant one or more new trees, if you have room for them. Selecting a tree that meets your needs and fits your site is a big decision. You, your neighbors, even future generations will live with the consequences of this decision, so take time to do a little research. Contact a nurseryman, your local NRD office or your local University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension office for tree selection and planting information.

The best time to plant trees is early in spring. That's why Arbor Day is in April. Trees will do best if they are planted in cold soil. Spring planting gives trees time to slowly emerge from dormancy with a minimum of transplant shock. You should also plant the small-

est tree you can tolerate, not the biggest one you can afford. Studies show that small trees (three feet tall or less) suffer less transplant shock, grow faster and have higher survival rates than larger trees.

I could have filled this column with all sorts of sound, economically sensible reasons to plant and care for trees. One of the most important reasons is not found in forestry textbooks. Children need trees. Most of us had special trees when we were young. Our children and grandchildren should have special trees, too.



Chemigation Permit Renewals Due June 1

Chemigation renewal forms have been sent to producers and are due, along with payment, in the Tri-Basin NRD office by June 1, 2012. Anyone who wants to apply fertilizer or ag chemicals through their irrigation system needs to apply for a chemigation permit for the 2012 season. Landowners and operators should contact Tri-Basin NRD at 308-995-6688 or 1-877-995-6688 regarding chemigation permits. All newly permitted chemigation systems must be inspected before use. A person who is certified as a chemigation applicator must supervise injection of fertilizer and ag chemicals in irrigation water.

NRD staff do routine inspections on chemigation systems from June until August. Routine inspections are required every three years. If your system is due for an inspection, you will receive a postcard this summer. Routine inspections must be completed for the permits to be eligible for renewal the following year.



TBNRD Offers ACE Camp Scholarships

Adventure Camp about the Environment (ACE) is a natural resources camp for students who have completed sixth, seventh or eighth grade, sponsored by Nebraska's natural resources districts. The camp will be held at the State 4-H Youth Camp at Halsey June 17-20. The cost of the camp is \$185.

Tri-Basin NRD is offering up to six scholarships that cover the full cost of camp registration for students from Gosper, Phelps, and Kearney Counties who want to attend this adventure camp. Scholarship applications are due in the TBNRD office by April 27, 2012. More information about the camp and applying for the scholarships can be found on Tri-Basin NRD's website, www.tribasinnrd.org, or by calling Nicole Salisbury at Tri-Basin NRD at 308-995-6688.

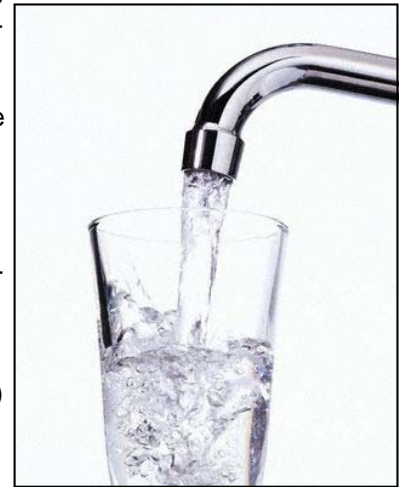
Free Domestic Water Testing Available

Rural residents in Gosper, Phelps and Kearney Counties can have their household drinking water tested for nitrates and bacteria free of charge once a year through a program offered by Tri-Basin Natural Resources District.

Any district resident who has a private household water well can pick up a free water testing kit from the Tri-Basin NRD office at 1723 Burlington Street in Holdrege. The kits are also available at the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation District offices in Elwood, Minden and Holdrege. The kits include instructions for obtaining the water samples.

Household owners mail the samples to Ward Laboratories in Kearney for testing. Test results are sent to Tri-Basin NRD, where they are recorded in a water quality database. The results are then forwarded to the household owner, along with information on protecting water quality.

For more information on this program, please contact Tri-Basin NRD at (308) 995-6688 or 1-877-995-6688.



Nebraska Natives



Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Chokecherry is a medium to large-sized shrub that forms a dense thicket from root suckers. It works well as the outer row in a multi-row windbreak. Chokecherry shrubs provide food and cover for birds and small mammals, making it a good choice for wildlife habitat plantings. Its white flowers bloom in



April or May and its fruit ripens in July. The cherries can be used for making jelly and wine.

Chokecherry should not be planted near other stone-fruit species because of western x-disease and black knot. Tent caterpillars can cause problems for chokecherry shrubs in the spring, but rarely kill the plant.



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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@tribasinrd.org
www.tribasinrd.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

CALENDAR

April 10..... Rep. Basin IMP Hearing, 7 p.m.
NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.*

April 25 & 26Water Jamboree
at Harlan County Reservoir

April 27 Arbor Day

May 8 NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.*

May 28 Memorial Day

June 12 NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

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

TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Lori Hagan	Elwood Office Secretary
Tami Reese	Holdrege Office Secretary

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 nsalisbury@tribasinrd.org.