

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

### DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST'S MONTHLY REPORT

2/15/2024

#### PERSONNEL/OFFICE

- The Lancaster and Cass County Service Centers are under normal operations.
- Lincoln Resource Conservationist job announcement closed on 1/16/24. Hope to fill position soon.
- Lincoln Program Assistant position is currently vacant. Hope to advertise soon.
- New employee: Zackary Zimmerman, Forester with the National Wild Turkey Federation. Zack's coverage area covers much of Nebraska but he will report to the Lincoln Field Office.

#### LPSNRD LAND TREATMENT

- Drought conditions have continued to impact the installation of structural practices in LPSNRD since the fall of 2022. Current soil moisture conditions are variable across the district; staff are still conducting soil moisture evaluations on all projects prior to construction. Projects are being released on a site-by-site basis but many are being withheld due to inadequate soil moisture conditions.
- LPSNRD currently has the following land treatment cost-share program applications:
  - Lancaster County
    - 22 Fall 2023 Structural Applications
    - 24 Fall 2023 Cover Crop Applications
  - Cass County
    - 32 Fall 2023 Structural Applications
    - 2 Fall 2023 Cover Crop Applications
- I held a meeting with Lincoln and Weeping Water staff to review the 2024 NSWCP Cost list and compare with local contactors' bills. We then drafted a 2024 LPSNRD Cost Share Program Cost Docket presented to the Land Resources subcommittee at their February meeting.
- Technicians are making site visits to the fall 2023 planted LPSNRD Cover Crop Program sites for photo/review.

#### USDA PROGRAMS

- The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) EQIP and CSP applications will be handled through the "ActNow" process. The ActNow process allows applications with select climate smart agricultural practices to be accepted, ranked, and potentially funded as we receive them; anytime between now and 3/1/24.
- For FY2024, IRA has added \$29 million (in addition to the \$20 million Nebraska EQIP General funds) for applications with select climate smart agriculture contracts.
- Technicians are working on structural projects as soil moisture conditions allow and checking completed projects.
- Planning staff are reviewing FY24 EQIP and CSP applications, completing in field inventories, conservation planning, cost estimates, application assessments, ranking, and beginning to obligate contracts.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

- ON GOING until 3/1/24- ActNow applications for EQIP IRA & CSP IRA
- ON GOING – continuous CRP Sign-up
- 2/19/24 Field Offices will be closed for President's Day Holiday