



Recognition of youth Water Quality Teams increases public awareness of the Shell Creek Watershed improvement efforts and builds widespread support for the project.



Planter clinics provided by Paul Jasa, UNL-Extension, keep Shell Creek landusers up to date on the latest in no-till planting equipment and residue management techniques.

Project: Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Project- Phase 6

Council/State Name: PrairieLand Resource Conservation & Development Council; Madison, Nebraska

In 2009, the Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Project efforts focused on the Shell West and Loseke Creek sub-watersheds. The project continues to utilize an intensive landuser education program provided by UNL-Extension and funded by a grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). In addition, the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) and the NDEQ provide grant funds to be used for cost-sharing and incentive payments to landusers who adopt new soil conservation practices. The grant funding is administered by PrairieLand RC&D on behalf of the Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group (SCWIG). New contracts developed in 2009 between the SCWIG and Shell Creek landusers include the following conservation practices: 1396.7 acres of continuous no-till, 580 acres of no-till consulting, 4.9 acres of grass filter strips, 34.4 acres of habitat buffers and 1 farm pond. Shell Creek landusers also protected the groundwater by completing 9 septic system upgrades and properly sealing 3 abandoned wells. The newly applied practices will save 5280 tons of topsoil per year and reduce over-application of nitrate and phosphorus fertilizers by 12 tons per year. NRCS field office staffs provide technical assistance to landusers with conservation practice application.

Total grant funding contributed by the NET and NDEQ for project administration and land treatment in 2009 was \$111,297. Another important partner in the project, the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District, contributed \$9148 for land treatment. The LPNNRD also contributed \$559 toward the purchase of water quality testing equipment and chemicals to be used by the Water Quality Teams from Newman Grove and Schuyler Central High schools. The Water Quality Teams, the SCWIG and the participating Shell Creek landusers contributed over 4800 hours of volunteer time.

Project partners: Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group, Lower Platte North Natural Resources District, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Nebraska-Extension, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Newman Grove and Schuyler Central High Schools, and the 1900 Shell Creek landusers.



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