



# Natural Resources Link

*Newsletter for Educators*

## Connecting with Nature

### Take It Outside!

Does your school have an outdoor classroom? CPNRD's Outdoor Classroom Program provides funding for schools and communities to implement or improve existing outdoor classrooms. The NRD has funded 14 classrooms since 2001 through the following grants:

#### Outdoor Classroom For Schools- up to \$2,500 annually

Outdoor classrooms are found in primary and secondary schools within the District. Some of the projects funded have included development of outdoor learning labs by planting native trees and plants, bird feeders, a weather station, walkways, seating and storage sheds. Butterfly gardens, pollinator habitats and native grasslands have also been funded.

#### Community Grant- up to \$2,000

The Community Grant provides community organizations funds to provide natural resources education to school groups or to the public. In October, a ribbon cutting was held at the Kearney Area Children's Museum for the Little Sprouts Outdoor Classroom. CPNRD provided funding for the Prairie Garden Walkway with plants that represent the prairie throughout the four seasons of the year. Tours and workshops will be conducted focusing on biodiversity, characteristics of native prairie plants, and the role that these plants play in supporting the prairie ecosystem.

Contact Marcia Lee to apply for an Outdoor Classroom grant at **(308) 385-6282** or [lee@cpnrd.org](mailto:lee@cpnrd.org).

## Changes to Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival

### Register for Groundwater Festival

Are you looking for an educational and fun field trip for your students to attend this school year? Registrations are being accepted for 4th & 5th-grade students to attend the 2018 Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival on Tuesday, May 8th at Central Community College/College Park in Grand Island, NE.



There is no cost to attend and a sack lunch will be provided to all students, teachers, chaperones, and bus drivers.



The Groundwater Festival promotes groundwater stewardship by providing students knowledge about protecting groundwater quality and conserving groundwater use. Water and natural resources professionals teach in-depth classrooms and stage shows throughout the day. Each classroom attending receives their own schedule for the four hours that they attend.

### Future Changes

The Festival Committee reviews evaluation forms submitted by teachers, presenters, and volunteers; as well as reviewing, updated science standards to improve the educational experience that students receive while attending the Festival. Starting in 2019, only 5th-grade classes will be invited to attend in order to accommodate more students, meet updated science standards, and provide each school the opportunity to send students in one grade.

Another change the committee made was to move the deadline for the Art Contest. Students will be invited to submit their art work after attending the festival, to allow them to communicate what they learned at the festival. It will also allow them more time to work on their poster during the early weeks of summer break. Prizes will be provided to the top three poster winners selected.

If you're interested in bringing your class to the Groundwater Festival, contact either Kelly Cole or Marcia Lee at: **(308) 385-6282** or email [cole@cpnrd.org](mailto:cole@cpnrd.org) or [lee@cpnrd.org](mailto:lee@cpnrd.org).

## Junior and Senior College Students

### Change to College Scholarships



Applications are being accepted for the CPNRD-Ron Bishop College Scholarship Program. Starting this fall, only junior and senior college students are eligible to receive a scholarship. The Central Platte Natural Resources District will provide five college students scholarships in the amount of \$1,000. Applicants must be pursuing a natural resources degree and reside within CPNRD's boundaries; which reach from Gothenburg to Columbus along the Platte River. Application deadline is April 15, 2018.

Some of the careers that qualify:

- Agriculture: Business Representative, Engineer, Inspector, Agronomist, Applied Science/Diversified
- Biologist                                  -Engineer: Civil, Mechanical, Chemical                                  -Conservationist, Resources Management
- Natural Resources/Environmental Educator                                  -Geographic Information Systems Specialist
- Geology Engineering                                  -Grazing Livestock System                                  -Hydrologist, Hydrogeologist
- Mechanized Systems/Soil and Water Conservation                                  -Rangeland Management
- Soil Conservationist/ Soil Engineer                                  -Vocational/Agriculture Educator                                  -Water Resources Specialist

**Applications are available on the CPNRD website at: [cpnrd.org](http://cpnrd.org) or contact Marcia Lee at (308) 385-6282 or email: [lee@cpnrd.org](mailto:lee@cpnrd.org).**

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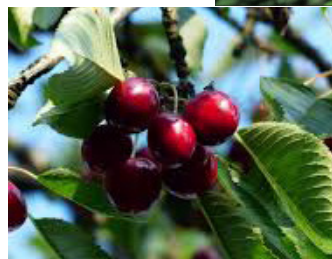
### Free Arbor Day Seedlings

Arbor Day is being celebrated this year on Friday, April 27th. The Central Platte NRD will be giving out Chokecherry shrub seedlings to help students celebrate this Nebraska-born holiday. The seedlings are grown at the Nebraska National Forest in Halsey, NE. Central Platte NRD will deliver the seedlings free of charge.

Each seedling is 8-12 inches tall and will be enclosed in a plastic bag with planting instructions. Chokecherries (*Prunus virginiana*) are good wildlife habitat, providing food and cover for birds and small mammals. Showy white flowers bloom in April or May, and the cherries ripen during July. The cherries can be used for making jelly and wine. It is a medium/large-sized shrub and is native to Nebraska. Average height is 6-12 feet at maturity and should be planted 6-10 feet from other trees and shrubs.

If you'd like to receive seedlings to educate your students about Arbor Day and the benefits of trees, contact Marcia Lee at: [lee@cpnrd.org](mailto:lee@cpnrd.org) or call **(308) 385-6282** with the following information:

- Teacher Name(s):**
- Number of seedlings per classroom:**
- Phone #:**
- Email and School addresses:**
- Best delivery dates after April 5th:**



## Middle School Educators and After-School Instructors

### Citizen Science in the Classroom- Educator Workshop

Citizen science in your classroom provides opportunities for your students to participate in REAL scientific investigations. Citizen science can inspire and motivate your students to create meaningful connections to the natural world and help scientists by gathering data, monitoring or interpreting results to produce relevant research. This **FREE** workshop will provide you with an introduction to citizen science; immerse you in a variety of current citizen science projects and present ways to incorporate citizen science into your science curriculum. Participants will receive:

- An introduction to citizen science
- Inspiration and guidance to incorporate activities into your classroom
- Citizen science activities and resources



**DATE:** November 19th, 2017 **TIME:** 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Hastings Museum-1330 N Burlington Ave. Hastings, Nebraska

**To Register Contact: Jamie Bachmann    Jamie.Bachmann@nebraska.gov    (402) 370-3374**

*Sponsored by Project WILD Nebraska, Northern Prairies Land Trust, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission*

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Central Platte NRD is one of 23 separate Natural Resources Districts created by the Nebraska Legislature in 1972 to protect the state's natural resources. The CPNRD strives to protect groundwater and surface water, reduce flood threats, conserve soil health, create and protect wildlife habitat, and educate children and adults to use natural resources wisely.

**Nebraska's NRDs: *Protecting Lives* • *Protecting Property* • *Protecting the Future***

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