

Water Resources Advisory Panel Holds October Progress Meeting

By Jessica Harder and Steve Ress, UNL Water Center

The UNL Water Center's Water Resources Advisory Panel (WRAP) held an update meeting to address progress on a number of issues on Oct. 8.

Included on the meeting's agenda were discussions on what the UNL Water Center's Water Resources Research Initiative was doing and the future of the water science major at UNL.

Leading that discussion was UNL School of Natural Resources assistant professor Aris Holz, who recently was named coordinator for the water science major. Most of the water science major discussion centered on attracting more students to the field of study at UNL by revitalizing the major and through increased exposure to potential students. Later discussions included state water quality issues, invasive species research and a conference on the impact and control of invasive species.

Attending the meeting were Ann Bleed, Jay Rempe, Susan Seacrest, Don Kraus, Mark Brohman and Lee Orton.

Update on WRAP proposals

At the last WRAP meeting, top WRAP proposals were discussed, along with discussions of possible sources of funding. Since then, several positive steps have occurred:

- 1) The NU Rural Initiative and NU's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources funded the first year of the top project, to get it underway. PIs are working with students, purchasing needed equipment and preparing to begin their study; however, the project results will be limited unless the project is fully funded.
- 2) The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources has partnered with the PIs of three of the top four proposals, plus one proposal in concert with UNL and pivot manufacturers, to submit proposals to the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET). These four proposals were submitted by the deadline, and are pending review. February 7th is the first day the PIs will hear from NET. Another hearing in April will determine whether the grants will go toward these projects.

WRAP proposals submitted include:

- Riparian vegetation project headed by Durelle Scott is seeking funding for the remaining two years of its three-year project.
- "Quantification of Surface Soil Evaporation for Different Soil and Crop Management Practices" headed by Suat Irmak.
- A proposal has been submitted by National Drought Mitigation Center's Mike Hayes and Megan Sittler on "Nebraska Climate Variability."

- 3) Discussion of alternative funding options if NET does not fund the projects.