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## **COST-SHARE**

### *Joining Forces to Battle Algae in Mozingo Lake*

Mozingo Lake is an approximately 1,000 acre reservoir in Nodaway County. This impoundment is an integral part of the Maryville community as it provides recreational opportunities and drinking water to a population of approximately 30,000 users. Local residents have historically enjoyed everything from water skiing to ice fishing on the lake and the City of Maryville operates a golf course and resort on its shores.

Beginning in 2017, this prized natural resource began to experience water quality issues in the form of harmful algal blooms. At first, the result of the algae was some benign taste and odor issues with drinking water sourced from the lake, but over time, subsequent blooms have caused shuttering of swimming beaches and increased water treatment costs for the city.

Since this problem first showed up, a broad coalition of partners have invested many hours and dollars into figuring out the cause and possible solutions for the degraded water quality in Mozingo Lake. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Nodaway County Soil and Water Conservation District, Missouri Rural Water Association, Farm Bureau and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are among the many groups that have provided expertise and funding with the ultimate goal of stopping the algal blooms in Mozingo. The partners hope to eradicate the algae by reducing the amount of nutrients that enter the lake from its tributaries.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources Soil and Water Conservation Program has taken an active part in the efforts since early on, but in April 2020, the Soil and Water Districts Commission took a big step and allocated \$200,000 for practices aimed at reducing sediment and nutrient runoff from farm fields that ultimately drain into Mozingo. NRCS also earmarked \$200,000 in cost-share funding and the local district set aside \$100,000 of their regular cost-share budget for the area. As of September 2021, the Nodaway County Soil and Water Conservation

District has obligated \$69,398 in contracts for practices in the Mozingo watershed with \$49,248 of those already installed. This includes \$14,704 paid in cover crops and \$34,544 paid to landowners for structural practices. With a total commitment of a half million dollars for cost-share, you should soon be able to see improvements in the water flowing down Mozingo Creek.

In July 2021, the Soil and Water Conservation Program entered into another partnership, this time with the U.S. Geological Survey to fund the deployment of a state of the art water quality monitoring station in Mozingo Creek. This monitor will help determine the baseline measurements for pollutants like nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment, while also measuring temperature, turbidity and dissolved oxygen. Over the next few years, as more and more conservation practices get implemented, we should also be able to document any resulting water quality improvements. This combination of highly targeted conservation practices and high-tech continuous monitoring will provide valuable insight into the relative effectiveness of some of our most popular conservation practices from a water quality standpoint. Gathering this type of data can help figure out what conservation practices work best in what locations. We can then use that experience to more efficiently target the application of conservation practices in the future.

## DISTRICT OPERATIONS

### *New Election Rules Finalized*

As a result of the Red Tape Reduction efforts undertaken by the State of Missouri in 2018, the specific rules governing soil and water conservation district (SWCD) supervisor elections were taken out of the Missouri Code of State Regulations. The revised regulation simply left election procedures up to the policy of the Soil and Water Districts Commission. The commission then instructed the Program Delivery and Districts Operations Committee to explore options for the election policy. As always, the committee did a great job carefully considering all sides of the issue. At the commission's December 2019 meeting, program staff presented the results of the committee

votes. Based on the overwhelming agreement with a draft proposed election framework, the commission moved to suspend all elections until the new rules could be revised and final policy could be adopted.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of committee members, program staff and the commission, we are positioned to hold elections in just a few months. The rest of this article will summarize the new election policy adopted by the commission at its August 2021 meeting.

Supervisor qualifications and voter eligibility remain the same as in years past, but the actual

election process will look much different. When asked what the goals for the new policies were, Jim Boschert with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Soil and Water Conservation Program said “The election procedures were changed to allow more flexibility in the nomination and voting processes. We hope this will increase the number of SWCD board nominees as well as the number of individuals that cast votes in the elections.”



Beginning in November 2021, all soil and water conservation districts in the state will conduct elections at the same time, and in the same areas every time. During this first round, areas two and four will elect supervisors. Then, areas one and three will hold elections two years from now. This standardized approach is meant to help provide clarity about how to proceed with elections and to make promoting nomination and election periods easier for districts. Historically some of the most common audit findings for districts were related to how they handled the publicizing of elections. The old rules had no set dates for different steps in the process, but rather outlined time frames based on when local newspapers circulated, among other factors. This led to many districts unknowingly violating the rules and being cited in audits. The new procedure provides a set time period that all districts will take nominees, publicize the election and receive ballots. Nothing is left up to interpretation.

<b><i>Publicize Nomination Period (30 days)</i></b>	<b><i>Nov. 1 – Dec. 2</i></b>
<b><i>Nomination Period (30 days)</i></b>	<b><i>Nov. 1 – Dec. 2</i></b>
<b><i>Nominees Determined</i></b>	<b><i>Dec.</i></b>
<b><i>Publicize Election (30 days)</i></b>	<b><i>Jan. 20 – Feb. 22</i></b>
<b><i>Voting Period (20 days)</i></b>	<b><i>Feb. 1 – Feb. 22</i></b>
<b><i>Last Day to Receive Ballots</i></b>	<b><i>Feb. 22</i></b>
<b><i>Ballots Counted by Judges</i></b>	<b><i>Feb. 23 - Feb. 28</i></b>
<b><i>Election Certification</i></b>	<b><i>March</i></b>

Another significant change is the elimination of nominating committees. The old rules required the formation of a committee to provide nominees. This committee had its own set of rules to follow, which also led to many audit findings. We have now replaced that process with a simple form that allows any eligible person to nominate themselves for election to the board.

The final significant changes are the allowance of mail-in ballots and an extended voting period. In the past, supervisor elections have experienced poor turnout and these expanded voting options will make it easier for land representatives to cast their ballot, hopefully leading to more participation in supervisor elections.

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## ***Above and Beyond: Q and A with Trish Rielly of the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program***

Trish Rielly began working with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources in 1994 with a focus on water quality. She started with the department as a waste water inspector in the Kansas City Region. From there, she transferred to the Environmental Services Program in Jefferson City. Trish spent 11 years collecting water quality data and conducting studies for the Water Protection and Solid Waste Programs. In 2007, Trish joined the Section 319 Nonpoint Source (NPS) Unit where she worked as a project manager for six years. In 2017, Trish returned as the NPS supervisor after spending time in the Water Protection Section's Monitoring and Assessment Unit, where she oversaw statewide water quality monitoring and assessments.



### **Q: For those that don't already know, what is the 319 program?**

A: 319 is a section of the Clean Water Act (CWA) that addresses nonpoint source pollution. Similar to the SWCP, the Section 319 NPS program is a voluntary program that provides financial support in the form of grants to implement urban and rural nonpoint source activities that help reduce the impacts of nonpoint source runoff on Missouri's waters.

### **Q: What are your goals for the 319 program?**

A: Federal guidelines require the Section 319 NPS program to develop a plan outlining our priorities every five years. The NPS plan for 2020-2025 focuses on working in watersheds with impaired waters, or the protection of waters categorized as state or national outstanding resource water, considered a waterbody of high ecological or economic value or designated as a public drinking water source.

### **Q: Are there opportunities for the 319 program and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to work together? Do you have any examples?**

A: The 319 program can help implement practices in addition to, or outside of, the annual priorities set by the SWCD. The North and Middle Fabius watershed planning efforts, are a great example of how SWCDs and 319 have worked together. The partners described the watershed NPS pollution concerns and identified practices that could be applied to improve the health of local rivers and streams. The watershed planning efforts were a collaboration of the University of Missouri Extension, Schuyler, Scotland, Clark, Lewis, Marion, Knox and Adair SWCDs, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Truman State University. The plan was accepted by the department and U.S. EPA Region 7. As a result, Section 319 funds are now available to be used to in the watershed for implementing management practices suggested in the watershed based plan. These funds are above and beyond anything provided by NRCS or the Soil and Water Conservation Program.

### **Q: What are some steps that districts could take today that would help them take advantage of the resources available through the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program?**

A: The first step towards taking advantage of Section 319 funds would be partnering with an eligible organization (University, nonprofit organization, state or local government) to submit an application to develop a watershed based plan that identifies and addresses NPS concerns. If there is already an EPA accepted watershed plan in your district, you could implement conservation practices identified within that plan. Anyone interested in more details about the 319 program can visit [our webpage](#).

# UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **Oct. 28**

District Operations and Program Delivery Committee Meeting

## **Nov. 3 and 4**

Missouri Forage and Grassland Council Annual Conference  
Springfield

## **Nov. 28 - Dec. 1**

Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Annual Training Conference  
Margaritaville Osage Beach

## **Nov. 29**

Soil and Water Districts Commission Meeting  
Margaritaville Osage Beach

What topics would you like to hear from the program office about? Please submit ideas and comments to [jake.wilson@dnr.mo.gov](mailto:jake.wilson@dnr.mo.gov).