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### **(Neb.) - Students Experience Conservation Fun at 9th Annual Festival**



By: John Thayer Posted at: 04/26/2012 03:46 PM

On Tuesday, April 24th, The Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District (UNWNRD) hosted the 9th Annual Northwest Nebraska Conservation Festival at the Assumption Arena in Chadron. A day full of environmental education was well-attended by approximately 120 area students from 4 schools, including Rushville, Crawford, St. Agnes Academy and Chadron.

Natural resources education is the focus of the Northwest Nebraska Conservation Festival and priority for numerous natural resource agencies who participate in the event each year. During the Festival, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) hosted a GPS Hunt and a soil education activity called Soil Detectives with the help of UNL Cooperative Extension. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality used a watershed model called an Enviroscape to educate the youth about pollution of surface water. Students learned about tree planting with the Nebraska Forest Service and City of Chadron. Panhandle Research Integration for Discovery Education taught youth about noxious weed control. Nebraska Game and Parks Commission partnered with Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory in a game called "Food for the Brood" and the City of Chadron partnered with the NRD assist students in building an edible aquifer snack. The UNWNRD and University of Nebraska educated students about water wells and contamination, while Cameco assisted with a fun-filled station where students enjoyed cooling off and launching water rockets. Smokey Bear and Woodsie Owl made a guest appearance to promote the messages of wildfire and pollution prevention.

In an effort to educate our youth about environmental issues and promote stewardship for our surroundings, the NRD hosts the Northwest Nebraska Conservation Festival every year. The event is open to fifth-grade students throughout the District. At the end of the event, each student was sent off with a Colorado Blue Spruce seedling and prizes from participating agencies.

For more information about the education programs available from UNWNRD, please visit [unwnrd.org](http://unwnrd.org), or call 308-432-6190.