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Winter 1994 Newsletter

Issue Number 4

NESEN MEMBERSHIP and RESOURCES DIRECTORY COMING SOON

Within the next month, a membership directory including names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of your NESEN colleagues will be sent to each member. Currently, there are approximately 130 members of NESEN. This includes 90 K-12 educators, which represents almost 30 percent of the earth science teachers in the Nebraska. This directory will contain a list of sources for earth science information and educational opportunities in Nebraska and the United States. A Teachers Guide for using maps illustrating Nebraska's geology, groundwater, topography, and soils will also be included. The objectives of this guide are to have students become familiar with the relationship between geology, groundwater, topography, and soils and how it relates to them.

1994 EARTH SCIENCE WORKSHOPS: A BASIS FOR LESSON PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In July 1994, the inaugural NESEN workshop series will be presented. The two workshops being offered this summer are **Nebraska's Dynamic Water System: A Geoscientist's Approach** and **What is in a Rock?** Descriptions of the individual workshops and registration forms are enclosed with this newsletter. Workshops are designed to be interactive and provide hands-on experience for teachers on earth science topics as they relate to the natural resources systems in Nebraska. Emphasis will also be given to where and how to get earth science information in Nebraska. The 1994 workshops are pilot projects that will provide the basis for developing a workshop series accessible to teachers throughout Nebraska. Materials developed in these workshops will be made available to other teachers in hardcopy and electronic formats.

NESEN AND THE NEBRASKA MATH AND SCIENCE INITIATIVE (NMSI)

The purpose of NMSI (formerly SSI) is to develop an infrastructure for improving science and math education in Nebraska. NMSI programs include: K-12 Curricula Enhancement Project; Practical Pre-College Math; Math Vantage; and Development of a State-wide Electronic Network. The next phase of NMSI is to create 7 regional coalitions that will include the 19 educational service units. The primary objectives of these coalitions is to improve professional development opportunities and increase public awareness and support for math and science education. Dave Gosselin and Francis Belohlavy attended a February 1, 1994 meeting to discuss NMSI. They highlighted the cooperation in the development of NESEN activities between K-12 educators and University staff. They also emphasized the importance of including earth science educational opportunities and potential NESEN involvement in NMSI coalitions. The coalitions and their activities are not a done deal. Contact your local ESU for further information about coalition development in your area.

NEBRASKA RANGE SHORTCOURSE

This shortcourse provides an opportunity for individuals to increase their knowledge of Nebraska's natural resource systems in the context of range ecology and management. Range resources are presented using the geology, hydrology, and soils of the Northern Great Plains as the framework. For more information and registration materials, contact Lowell Moser, 402-472-1558 or Department of Agronomy, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Box 830915, Lincoln, NE 68583-0915.

NESEN AT NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SCIENCE ANNUAL MEETING

The 1993 NATS meeting included the first NESEN-sponsored Lesson Plan Share-a-Thon. Although there were only five presenters, over 60 teachers acquired their materials illustrating the need for this type of activity. This activity is being planned for next year's NATS conference and your participation is strongly encouraged. Francis Belohlavy (UNL), Bob Feurer (North Bend High School), and Dave Gosselin (UNL) presented programs on the soils of Nebraska and the Nebraska's Water from the Land and in the Air. Between 20 and 30 teachers participated and received materials from these programs.

ROCK COLLECTING FIELD TRIP

This event, originally scheduled for the Fall 1993 NATS conference, has been rescheduled for May 28, 1994 in the late morning and early afternoon. It will give an opportunity not only to collect some interesting specimens and talk geology, but socialize with your earth science teaching colleagues. More information will be in the spring NESEN newsletter. Contact Ed Schafer or Al Musson for more details.

K-12 EARTH SCIENCE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AT NORTH CENTRAL/SOUTH CENTRAL SECTION OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA MEETING, SPRING 1995.

The NESEN steering committee is still in the process of considering potential activities for the earth science education community. A subcommittee will be developing specific recommendations over the next month. One of the potential formats is to have a K-12 science education day with a lesson plan share-a-thon, tours through exhibits and poster sessions, a luncheon with key note speaker, and panel discussion on an earth science education. This day will provide teachers with an opportunity to learn more about the earth science community and make connections with other earth science professionals in industry and academia. If you have ideas for this event or would like to participate in its planning, please contact Dave Gosselin at 402-472-8919.

GROUNDWATER-LEVEL CHANGES IN NEBRASKA, 1992

(Water Survey Paper No. 72) is now available from the Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The area affected by groundwater declines decreased in the three groundwater control areas in effect in Nebraska during 1992, compared with the decline acreage for the same areas during 1991. The decreases in the acreage of groundwater-level declines came in the Upper Big Blue, Lower Big Blue and Upper Republican groundwater control areas.

Approximately 20,000 water-level measurements from nearly 4,000 observation wells in 1992 were added to the database of historical water-level records. The data indicates groundwater levels in several counties have declined 5 to 40 feet from predevelopment.

Data used in the report was provided by 38 federal, state and local agencies and municipalities. Copies of the report can be purchased from the Conservation and Survey Division, 113 Nebraska Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0517 for \$3.50. Add \$1.50 per book for postage and appropriate city and state sales tax.

THOUGHTS ON EARTH SCIENCE EDUCATION

To make informed decisions about protection from floods and earthquakes, about maintaining sources of water, minerals, and energy, and about the threats from hazardous and radioactive wastes, acid rain, and global climate change, the average citizen needs a better appreciation for natural processes and phenomena. Creating an appreciation and awareness in young people for the importance that earth sciences should play in developing workable solutions for environmental and natural resource problems can not be over emphasized.