NARD Employee Years of Service!

Congratulations to Natural Resources Districts board members and staff on 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of service. Your hard work and dedication is appreciated.

40 Years of Service!
NRD Managers: Tom Moser, LCNRD; Ron Case, NPNRD; Kent Miller, TPNRD

NRD Board Members
Steve Kelly, LBNNRD (20); Eleni Wesely, LENRD (30); Leroy Hoesing, LCNRD (20); Jim McDermott, LPNRND (20); Oral Gustad, NNRD (20); Mike Spoccer, NNRD (20); Rich Tesar, PMNRD (20); Keith Rexroth, SPNRD (20); Bradley Lundeen, TBNNRD (20); Ray Winz, TBNNRD (20); Roy Stewart, UENRD (30)

NRD Staff
Dan Clement, CPNDRD (25); Deb Jarzynka, CPNDRD (25); Kevin Orvis, LBNNRD (20); Jeanne Koenig, LCNRD (20); Leon Koehlmos, LLNRD (35); Virginia John, LLNRD (30); Steve Bartels, NNRD (25); Roy Lyles, PNPRD (25); Jack Brunnette, ULNRD (20).

2013 NARD Conservation Award Winners

Director of the Year – Orval Gigstad, Nemaha NRD
Nominated by Nemaha NRD
Educator of the Year – Jan Zink, Norris High School
Nominated by Nemaha NRD
Outstanding Grassland Award – Alvin Kruml, Sargent, NE
Nominated by Lower Loop NRD
Outstanding Community Conservation – City of Sidney
Nominated by South Platte NRD
Outstanding Tree Planter – Forney Ranch, Alliance, NE
Nominated by the Upper Niobrara White NRD

Events Hosted By The NARD

• Annual Conference
• NARD Board Meetings
• NRD Manager Meetings
• Legislative Conference
• I&E Meetings
• Basin Tours
• Washington D.C. Conference
• Public Relations Trainings
• Technician Trainings
• Basin Tour

Contact NARD!
Nebraska Association of Resources Districts
601 S. 12 St., Suite 201
Lincoln, NE 68502
Phone: (402) 471-7670
Email: nard@nrdnet.org
Fax: (402) 471-7677
Website: nrdnet.org

2013 Legislative Recap

LB 747 – Change sunset for the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force.
Carlson – legislation for the Riparian Vegetation Task Force from June 30, 2010 to June 30, 2015. The bill also extends the due date for the final report from June 30, 2013 to June 30, 2015.

LB517e – Create the Water Funding Task Force. Carlson. The task force is to develop a list of water projects and related funding needs. The bill included the emergency clause so it becomes effective as soon as the Governor signs it.

The Water Funding Task Force consists of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and citizens representing public, private, and non-profit organizations. The task force would coordinate with the Nebraska Water Plan.

In appointing members, the amendment requires the governor to se

NARD Executive Board

The NARD executive committee consists of the NARD board officers and the chairs of the Information and Education and Legislative committees. The NARD board consists of representation from each of the local 23 NRDs. The board meets five times throughout the year and help guide the association.

Joe Anderjaska from the Middle Republican NRD is the current NARD President. Anderjaska has served on the Middle Republican NRD board for twelve years, on the NARD board for ten years and previously held the Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer positions. Anderjaska was appointed by Governor Heineman to serve on the Republican River Basin Water Sustainability Task Force.

Terry Martin from the Upper Republican NRD is the current NARD Vice President. Martin has served 12 years on the URNRD Board and currently is board chair, and has served five years as an NARD Board Representative. Martin previously served as the NARD Board Secretary/Treasurer.

NARD executive committee members, along with the president and vice president, include Jim Bendfeldt from the Central Platte NRD, NARD secretary/treasurer; Jim Meisner from Twin Platte NRD, chair of the legislative committee; Jim Johnson from South Platte NRD, chair of the information and education

Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) worked together with the Natural Resources Committee and other state senators during the 104th Legislative Session to protect the future of Nebraska’s natural resources. Senators approved the 100-day bill, and the Governor signed 15 bills that affect NRDs. The following provides just a few of the key bills enacted this year.

(a) Recommendations for a strategic plan which prioritizes programs, projects, and activities in Nebraska. The recommendations shall give equal consideration to and be classified into the following categories: (i) Research, data, and modeling needed to assist the state in meeting its water management goals; (ii) Reclamation or restoration of water supply infrastructure, new water supply infrastructure, or water supply infrastructure maintenance; (iii) Conjunctive management, storage, and integrated management of ground water and surface water; and (iv) Compliance with interstate compacts or agreements or other formal state contracts or agreements;
(b) Recommendations for ranking criteria to identify funding priorities based on, but not limited to, the following factors: (i) The extent to which the program, project, or activity provides increased water productivity and otherwise maximizes the beneficial use of Nebraska’s water resources for the benefit of its residents; (ii) The extent to which the program, project, or activity assists the state in meeting its obligations under interstate compacts or decrees or other formal state contracts or agreements; (iii) The extent to which the program, project, or activity utilizes objectives described in the Annual Report and Plan of Work for the Nebraska State Water Planning and Review Process issued by the Department of Natural Resources; (iv) The extent to which the program, project, or activity has been approved for, but has not received, funding through an established state program; (v) The cost effectiveness of the program, project, or activity relative to achieving the state’s water management goals; (vi) The extent to which the program, project, or activity contributes to the state’s ability to leverage state and federal funds, or other partners to maximize the use of its resources; and (vii) The extent to which the program, project, or activity assists the state in meeting its obligations to leverage state dollars with local or federal government partners or other partners to maximize the use of its resources; and the Governor signed 15 bills that affect NRDs. The following provides just a few of the key bills enacted this year.

(c) Recommendations for legislation on a permanent structure and process through which the programs, projects, or activities described in this section will be provided with funding, including: (i) A permanent governing board structure and membership; (ii) An application process for a statewide project distribution mechanism; and (iii) A timeframe for funding allocations based on the list of programs, projects, and activities provided for in this section.

(d) Recommendations for the annual funding amount and the start date for distribution of funds; and
(c) Recommendations for statutory changes relating to regulatory authorities and to funds and programs administered by, and boards and commissions under the direction of the department based on the task force’s evaluation of the efficiency of such funds, programs, boards, and commissions.

LB 549 – Change the scrap tire recycling grant provision and fees. Schulz. The bill extends the sunset date for grants for new scrap tire projects, if acceptable scrap tire project applications are received. The sunset date would be extended from June 30, 2014 to June 30, 2019. The bill increases the cap on funds available as grants to counties, municipalities, and agencies for the purposes of planning and implementing facilities and systems to further the goals of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act. Currently, fees collected in excess of one million dollars are made available as grants.

LB 634 – Adopt the Wildfire Control Act of 2013. Davis. This bill requires the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to contract for all costs to place one single-engine air tanker in Nebraska for use in fighting wildfires. It outlines intent for NEMA to deploy the single-engine air tanker to prevent the rapid spread of wildfires upon ignition.

Members laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during the annual Washington DC Conference.
Notes from Dean Edson, NARD Executive Director

The NARD Foundation

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts’ Foundation was established as a way to support students with a desire to enter the field of natural resources. In 2012, over $20,000 dollars were raised for the NARD Foundation to support valuable programs that can help young people learn more about natural resources. Funds were raised through a variety of activities including a live and silent auction at the Annual Conference. The NARD Foundation supports the following programs:

- The Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute is a weeklong conference held each July for juniors and seniors in high school to learn more about agriculture and natural resources in Nebraska.
- Sponsored five Nebraska college students for Ag Day on the Hill. The Nebraska representatives spent National Ag Day in Washington D.C. learning about agriculture and natural resource issues.
- Sponsored three awards and the 3rd Annual Agriculture Issues Academy at the 8th Annual State FFA Convention held in Lincoln in early April. The three award areas were Outdoor-Recruitment Proficiency, Natural Resources Chapter Award, and the Environmental and Natural Resources Management Career Development Event (CDR).
- The Neihortivision, an agriculture, wildlife and science competition for grades 9-12. This year’s winning team, Concordia High School, represented Nebraska at the North American Envirothon.
- The Nebraska Foundation for Agricultural Awareness to spread a positive agriculture message to teachers, students and the community about the importance of agriculture.
- Adventure Camp about the Environment (ACE) in 2013 drew 30 campers from across the state, and many of the campers received scholarships from their local NRD. The camp is open to sixth through eighth graders and focused on natural resources.
- The Nebraska LEAD (Leadership, Education, Action and Development) Program strives to provide young men and women with skills and experiences needed to become effective and dedicated advocates for agriculture.
- Supporter of the Nebraska Great Park Pursuit. The Great Park Pursuit promotes active lifestyles while increasing awareness of the natural rich outdoors recreation opportunities throughout Nebraska.

These programs are a great opportunity to recognize Nebraska’s youth for their interest and hard work in helping to protect our natural resources.

NRD/DNR Liaison

The NRD/DNR Water Resources position was created in 2013 as a partnership between the NRD’s and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop and promote water management plans in the district and basin levels. It’s an exciting time for this position as the NRD/DNR Liaison has implemented its new role and continues to work at the national level to develop an integrated approach to managing our state’s water resources.

While recent drought has presented many challenges, thanks to the NRD and DNR partnerships and the favorable Integrated Management System, these challenges have led to some remarkable advancement being made in the development and implementation of water management plans across the state. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Republican basin, where all NRD’s across the basin, working together in partnership with DNR, continue to make strides in ensuring Nebraska continues to achieve compliance with the Republican River Compact.

Progress in implementation of management plans is also occurring in the Upper Platte Basin, where NRDs continue to work in partnership with DNR to implement programs and projects to achieve Platte River Recovery and Implementation Program goals and fulfill the 1st increment requirements of the basin wide IPM.

Elsewhere across the state, DNR and seven local NRD’s have partnered up to form the Lower Platte (N) Basin Committee, the group is working to establish a voluntary basin wide management plan. Other NRDs across the state with existing IPM’s continue to develop the models and plans as needed, and several districts are working to develop voluntary IPM’s.

The NRD/DNR Water Resources position will continue to be involved with the development and implementation of these water management plans across the state, working to streamline processes and ensure an effective partnership between the NRD’s and DNR.

NRD Tree Program

Approximately 600,000 tree and shrub seedlings were sold by NRDs to Nebraska landowners in 2013. For the fifth consecutive year the NRD assisted NRDs in distributing over 18,000 tree and shrub seedlings to landowners across Nebraska. This is just one of many ways the NRD helps foster awareness and appreciation of natural resources conservation among our state’s young people.

The Lower Elkhorn NRD and NARD hosted the NRD Forestry Workshop in June at the Lower Elkhorn NRD’s Upper Platte Community College Campus. The workshop included tree and shrub seedling inventory procedures, 16 hour of Lower Elkhorn NRD facilities and equipment, mulch fabric removal demonstrations, and a roundtable discussion.

The Nebraska Forestry Association, developing monitoring plans and quality assurance project plans, and representing the NRD’s at the National Forestry Association meetings.

Public Relations

The Nebraska Environmental Education Program sponsors, promotes, hosts or assists with a variety of programs and projects to educate both youth and adults about conservation and natural resources. Throughout the year NARD promotes and educates teachers and citizens on education opportunities offered by NRDs. Over the past year the NARD helped coordinate and promoted the state and regional Land Judging and Range Judging Competition, and continued to develop and distribute marketing and education information about contests on their website.

In 2013 about 500 students from 9th-12th grades participated in the Nebraska Envirothon regional competitions. The 2013 Envirothon Team from the Platte River Basin won the National Envirothon competition being held in Bozeman, MT the first week of August.
The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) has created a Hall of Fame award for those individuals who have made significant contributions through Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts. Inaugural inductees include: Ron Bishop, Central Platte NRD; Dick Mercer, Central Platte NRD; and former State Senator Maurice Kremer.

“This is an exciting time for the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts and the induction of the inaugural Hall of Fame recipients,” said Joe Anderjaska, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) Board President. “The purpose of the Natural Resources Hall of Fame is to reward individuals for service and commitment to natural resources conservation and these three inductees are very deserving candidates.”

The candidates are elected into the Hall of Fame by vote of current NRD Managers and NARD Board members. There are three Hall of Fame categories including: Natural Resources District Board Member, Natural Resources District Employee and “Other” NRD Supporter which includes individuals outside the NRD system.

Ron Bishop was nominated by the Central Platte NRD. Bishop retired in June of 2013 as the manager at the Central Platte NRD and had served in the position since the district was formed in 1972. Bishop has played a critical role in helping to develop the NRD structure and promoting natural resources conservation.

Dick Mercer has been dedicated to natural resources as a director and board member of the Central Platte NRD since 1972. Prior to that he was director on the Buffalo-Ravenna Soil and Water Conservation District. Mercer was nominated by the Central Platte NRD. Senator Maurice Kremer was nominated by the Upper Big Blue NRD for his exceptional leadership in the Nebraska Legislature for the enactment of the laws creating Natural Resources Districts and the Nebraska Groundwater Management Act. The award was given posthumously and was accepted on behalf of his father, Senator Maurice Kremer.

“The award is designed to recognize outstanding effort and dedication to conservation, resulting in improving natural resources in Nebraska,” said Anderjaska.
Nebraska NRDs Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future!

In 1872, Nebraskan J. Sterling Morton creates Arbor Day, the first holiday dedicated to trees and tree planting. This event was a significant milestone in the history of reforestation efforts in Nebraska. Morton, a proponent of the Arbor Day idea, was influenced by his experiences in South America, where he observed the positive impact of tree planting on soil conservation and water quality. He believed that the widespread planting of trees could help address the challenges of desertification and improve the overall health of the land.

The Nebraska NRDs are instrumental in facilitating such reforestation efforts, working closely with farmers, landowners, and other stakeholders to promote the planting of trees and other vegetation. Their efforts help protect Nebraska’s natural resources, enhance water quality, and create a more sustainable environment for future generations.

The Upper Republican, Middle Republican, Upper Loup, Lower Loup, and Middle Niobrara NRDs have partnered with Nebraska’s Crop Loss Program to help farmers and agricultural producers in the state. The program was established to assist farmers and help foster a new conservation ethic across the state. The Twin Platte NRD has partnered with Plauntracto, a local company, to provide trees for planting projects. The program will provide trees to farmers and landowners for use in shelterbelts, windbreaks, and other conservation projects.

The North Platte NRD has integrated advanced technology into its water management programs. For example, the use of LiDAR, tablets, Arc Hydro, and SQL databases allows the District to collect, analyze, and present water information in an efficient and effective manner. The project will use LiDAR technology to map the entire District for water management purposes, improving accuracy and efficiency.

In 1997, the Nebraska NRDs partnered with the Platte Basin NRDC to implement the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP). This program is designed to help Nebraska fulfill its commitment to the Platte River Compact. It targets areas of low groundwater availability, low transmissivity, or potential for irrigation runoff. Projects such as the Twin Platte NRD’s water augmentation project in Dundy County, the Middle Republican NRD’s water augmentation project in Antelope County, and the Lower Loup NRD’s tree planting project in Cuming County are examples of the progress made under the PRRIP.

The Central Platte NRD has reached agreements with several canal companies in Dawson County to undertake construction projects. These agreements will help protect the local ag economy, provide excess flows for groundwater recharge, and reduce water conflicts between states.

The Lower Little Blue NRD continues to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to protect the local ag economy and provide excess flows for groundwater recharge. The project is in progress and will benefit Nebraska’s agricultural community.

The North Platte NRD, partnering with the City of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska, completed the Antelope Valley Project in 2012. This project brought many transportation and community revitalization benefits. Overall, the rural water line will provide a safe, secure, and reliable source of water for over 235 residents in the surrounding area.

Projects such as this trail and outdoor classroom area project in Nuckolls County, the Urban Special Project program, and the Potten Trails Recreation Area are examples of the projects that are enhancing Nebraska’s natural resources. The Rural Water System which began operation on January 1, 1985 with two systems is providing water service to rural areas in Nebraska. The Nebraskan Environmental Trust grant will help fund test wells and monitoring wells with UNL Conservation & Survey Division to develop the hydrogeologic framework, monitor water quality and quantity, and help guide management decisions for the directors and landowners of LCNRD.

The South Platte NRD also continues to seek the latest scientific information to understand its ground water supply and management opportunities. The project will provide water resources to the State of Nebraska to be used for compact compliance with the Republican River Compact. More than 3,200 acres were retired in 2012 under the Middle Republican NRD’s Water Augmentation Project. The project’s purpose is to help Nebraska and Colorado fulfill their groundwater management plans.

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Land agents use rich stores of groundwater beneath Nebraska as a selling point to attract homesteaders. Water, and effective policies to manage and protect it, is a major focus for NRDs.

In 1935 the U.S. Soil Conservation Service is established to assist farmers and help foster a new conservation ethic across the United States. In 1939, the USGS began operation on January 1, 1985 with two communities, Verdigris and Wistow and 160 rural customers. The system continues to grow with the development of a new well field and the addition of 3 communities. The Upper Eklhorn NRD Board of Directors has voted to cancel the October 2013 Sign-up for New Groundwater Irrigated Acres for the 2014 growing season. To address the decline in groundwater levels across the district, lack of recharge, and the drought conditions, some felt giving the water table a chance to recharge would be in the best interest of our water resources.

The Central Platte NRD has reached agreements with several canal companies in Dawson County to undertake construction projects. These agreements will help protect the local ag economy, provide excess flows for groundwater recharge, and endangered species required by the Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan.

The Little Blue NRD adopted a policy of Land use Concessions to irrigate it too, reduce conflicts between users in areas of low groundwater availability, low transmissivity, or poor geologic composition. It is used to determine if the development would pose a threat to the soil resource and cause potential for irrigation runoff. The project is in progress and will benefit Nebraska’s agricultural community.

The Lower Niobrara NRD began construction in 1984 on the South Platte NRD headwater sub-basin and in 1987 on the Middle Niobrara NRD. The project will provide water resources to the State of Nebraska to be used for compact compliance with the Republican River Compact. More than 3,200 acres were retired in 2012 under the Middle Republican NRD’s Water Augmentation Project. The project’s purpose is to help Nebraska and Colorado fulfill their groundwater management plans.

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The Lewis & Clark NRD continues to provide guidance with species selection and shelterbelt design under the Conservation Tree Program which began operation on January 1, 1985 with two communities, Verdigris and Wistow and 160 rural customers. The system continues to grow with the development of a new well field and the addition of 3 communities. The Upper Eklhorn NRD Board of Directors has voted to cancel the October 2013 Sign-up for New Groundwater Irrigated Acres for the 2014 growing season. To address the decline in groundwater levels across the district, lack of recharge, and the drought conditions, some felt giving the water table a chance to recharge would be in the best interest of our water resources.

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