

NRD 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 Cacek, NPNRD; Kent Miller, TPNRD

NRD Board Members

Steve Kelly, LBBNRD (20); Elden Wesely, LENRD (30); Leroy Hoelsing, LCNRD (20); Jim McDermott, LPNNRD (20); Orval Gistad, NNRD (20); Mike Speece, NNRD (20); Rich Tesar, PMNRD (20); Keith Rexroth, SPNRD (20); Bradley Lundeen, TBNRD (20); Ray Winz, TBNRD (20); Roy Stewart, UENRD (30)

NRD Staff

Dan Clement, CPNRD (25); Deb Jarzynka, CPNRD (25); Kevin Orvis, LBNRD (20); Jeanne Koenig, LCNRD (20); Leon Koehlmoss, LLNRD (35); Virginia John, LLNRD (30); Steve Bartels, NNRD (25); Roy Lyles, NPNRD (25); Jack Brummet, 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 Loup 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



Members laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during the annual Washington DC Conference.

NARD Executive Board

The NARD executive committee consists of the NARD board officers and the chairs of the Information and Education and Legislature committees. The NARD board consists of representation from each of the local 23 NRDs. The board members meet 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

Contact NARD!

Nebraska Association of Resources Districts
601 So. 12 St., Suite 201
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: (402) 471-7670
Email: nard@nrdnet.org
Fax: (402) 471-7677
Website: nrdnet.org

NARD Annual Report

2013 Legislative Recap

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 and the Governor signed 15 bills that affect NRDs. The following provides just a few of the key bills enacted this year.

LB 477-- Change sunset for the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force. Carlson.

- The bill extends the sunset date for the Riparian Vegetation Task Force from June 30, 2013 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 eleven (11) additional members to be appointed by the governor. These members will represent public power and irrigation districts, irrigation districts, municipalities, agriculture, wildlife conservation, livestock producers, agribusiness, manufacturing, metropolitan utilities district and outdoor recreation users.

In appointing members, the amendment requires the governor to seek to create a broad-based task force with knowledge and experience with and representative of Nebraska's water use and economy. In addition, the Governor shall give equal recognition to the importance of both water quantity and water quality. In making the appointments, the bill allows the Governor to solicit and accept nominations from water interest groups in the state. Representation must represent diverse geographic regions of the state including urban and rural areas.

The bill requires the task force to submit a report to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2013 that contains the following:

(a) Recommendations for a strategic plan which prioritizes programs, projects, and activities in need of funding. 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) Rehabilitation 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 dollars with local or federal government partners or other partners to maximize the use of its resources; and (vii) The extent to which the program, project, or activity contributes to multiple water supply management goals, including, but not limited to, flood control, agricultural uses, recreation benefits, wildlife habitat, conservation of water resources, and preservation of water resources for future generations;

(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; (iii) A statewide project distribution mechanism; and (iv) 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

(e) 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 sunset provision and fees. Schilz.

- 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 634e -- 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.



Notes from Joe Anderjaska, NARD Board President

After seeing our 40th Anniversary come and go, we thought it was time to have our own NARD Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was established as the highest honor for up to three people each year. Our inaugural inductees are, Employee: Ron Bishop, Director: Dick Mercer, Supporter: former State Senator Maurice Kremer. These men are all true pioneers for the NRD cause. I feel it is very important that we not only honor these great men but use what they have taught us in our challenges for the future.



We are in the beginning stages of seeing some of our experienced leaders step down to enjoy another time in their lives. With the retirements of Ron Bishop, Ron Cacek, and Dan Smith we realized that a new generation of leaders is dawning on our organization. It is a sad thing to see these great leaders move on but an exciting time as new faces, new friends, and new ideas are ahead. These men and many others have been true mentors and great leaders, devoting a lifetime to our natural resources.

This past year was eventful and more history was made with the combined work of four NRDs on the N CORPE project. The Twin Platte NRD, Upper Republican NRD, Middle Republican NRD, and Lower Republican NRD purchased almost 16,000 irrigated acres that they will retire and convert to native grass and use that water to enhance the Republican and/or Platte Rivers to meet their respective requirements. The Papio-Missouri River NRDs Krampfer Lake project, in Dakota county, when completed will offer not only the needed flood control but years of recreational enjoyment for all. The Bazile Groundwater Management Area, is an area of groundwater quality concern in Northeast Nebraska as a result of high nitrates. The Lewis and Clark, Lower Elkhorn, Upper Elkhorn and Lower Niobrara NRDs are working collectively to address the high nitrates in the groundwater. The Bazile Groundwater Management Area Plan is the first plan in the country to be submitted to EPA for 319 funding under the criteria of an Alternative Plan.

Let us all celebrate the passing of the torch and the bright future it holds for all of us in protecting the lives, the property, and the future of our great state of Nebraska.

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 youth education and programs where young people can 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 85th Annual State FFA Convention held in Lincoln in early April. The three award areas were Outdoor-Recreation Proficiency, Natural Resources Chapter Award, and the Environmental and Natural Resources Management Career Development Event (CDE).

*The Nebraska Envirothon, 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.

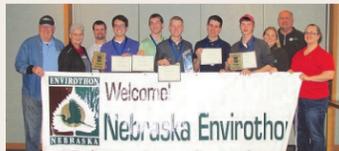
*The Nebraska Foundation for Agricultural Awareness to spread a positive agriculture message to teachers, students and parents about the importance of agriculture.

*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 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 leaders and advocates for agriculture.

*Supporter of the Nebraska Great Park Pursuit. The Great Park Pursuit promotes active lifestyles while increasing awareness of the nature rich outdoor 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/NDNR 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 quantity management plans in the district and basin levels. It's an exciting time for this position, as DNR prepares to implement its new rules and methods for evaluating the fully appropriated status of basins. For the first time, basins will be evaluated using methods that quantifiably measure both supplies and demands. Furthermore, DNR and the NRD's continue to not only develop and expand existing IMP's, but several new voluntary IMP's are also in the works.

While recent dry weather has presented many challenges, thanks to the NRD and DNR partnerships and the favorable Integrated Management system, those 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 IMP.

Elsewhere across the state, DNR and seven local NRD's have partnered up to form the Lower Platte River Basin Coalition, the group is working to establish a voluntary basin wide management plan. Other NRDs across the state with existing IMP's continue to develop and modify the plans as needed, and several districts are working to develop voluntary IMP's.

The NRD/NDNR 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 ninth consecutive year the NARD assisted NRDs in distributing over 19,000 tree seedlings to elementary school children across Nebraska. This is just one of many ways the NARD 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 Northeast Community College in Norfolk. Topics and activities included tree and shrub seedling inventory management, a tour of Lower Elkhorn NRD facilities and equipment, fabric mulch removal demonstrations, and a roundtable discussion.

The NARD helped plan, coordinate and host the U.S. Forest Service Client's Day and Forestry Conference in October held at Bessey Nursery and the State 4H Camp near Halsey, NE.

For the fifth consecutive year the NARD gathered from NRDs information about their tree programs for the purpose of sharing with each other services offered and charges for each service. Each year different sets of supplemental information are requested to help gauge changing needs and opportunities.

DEQ/NRD Liaison Activities

The NRD/NDEQ Liaison position was created to work collaboratively with NDEQ and the NRDs regarding environmental issues. One role is to identify NDEQ resources available to assist NRDs in furthering their responsibilities. During 2013 four NRDs (Lewis & Clark, Lower Niobrara, Upper Elkhorn, and Lower Elkhorn) worked in cooperation with the NRD/NDEQ Liaison to develop a Bazile Groundwater Management Area (BGMA) Plan addressing groundwater contamination and submitted a 319 and NET grant proposal to fund activities related to the long and short term goals of the BGMA Plan.

Other activities associated with this position include coordinating training events and conferences, grant writing and review assistance, writing annual reports, assisting with Envirothon, developing monitoring plans and quality assurance project plans, and representing the NARD on several work groups.

Information and Education

Public Relations- The NARD has assisted NRDs with public relations, communication, education, developing partnerships, and training needs as the districts pursue their natural resources management responsibilities. The NARD has developed and outlined priorities and a short-term and long-term plan for public relations efforts for Information and Education (I&E) staff and NRD managers and directors.

The NARD continues to promote NRDs and NRD projects through statewide press releases, print materials, website, and presentations and direct communication with partners. Newsletters, statewide factsheets, legislative reports, and social media have been developed to promote Nebraska NRDs. NARD uses "Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future" for promotion and to tell the NRD story and encourage its use by all NRDs.

Public relations and communications training sessions have been provided to I&E staff, NRD managers and board members. The NARD continues to hold message development group discussion sessions and trainings throughout the year with individual NRDs' board members, managers and employees to continue upholding the image of the NRDs.

Education Programs- The NARD sponsors, promotes, hosts or assists with a variety of projects and programs 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 Contest and provides educational information about contests on their website.

In 2013 about 500 students from 9th-12th grades participated in the Nebraska Envirothon regional competitions. The 2013 Nebraska Envirothon State Championship team was from Concordia high school. The state competition at Chalco Hills Recreation Area and the Papio-Missouri River NRD. Students from across the state participated in five-member teams, and competed against 13 other Nebraska high school teams. Concordia high school represented Nebraska at the North American Envirothon contest in Bozeman, MT the first week of August.

Notes from Dean Edson, NARD Executive Director

The NARD staff is honored to be working for the districts directors and staff and works hard to provide assistance with programs that provide assistance to the districts with legislation, tree programs, water management, youth programs, benefit programs and public relations. The NARD Staff is specially honored to be working for the NARD while the districts are celebrating the 41-year anniversary of the NRDs. There are several reports provided in this document of the programs carried out by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) on behalf of Nebraska's 23 Natural Resources Districts.

The NARD manages the Health Insurance Risk Pool and Retirement Programs for the benefit of NRD staff. The NARD Board and committees have worked hard over the years to make this program a success. While FY 2011-12 ended in losses, the program ended up \$862,000 in the black for FY 2012-13. The previous year's addition to reserves allowed the program to withstand the loss in FY 11-12. The NARD also manages the retirement programs which continue to grow even in a sluggish economy.

The NARD also manages the NARD Foundation which has grown significantly over the past 12 years. What started out as a small foundation with \$4,100 in assets and providing funding to only one program has grown to over \$332,000 in assets funding seven youth programs. The fundraisers at the annual meeting and member involvement help grow the program each year.

The association strives to balance our general operating budget while maintaining quality programs for the districts and local employees. For the 18th year in a row, the NARD has balanced our budget and added to the reserves. However, not one of these accomplishments would have happened if it was not for member involvement from the district board members and staff. To all of you, thank you very much!

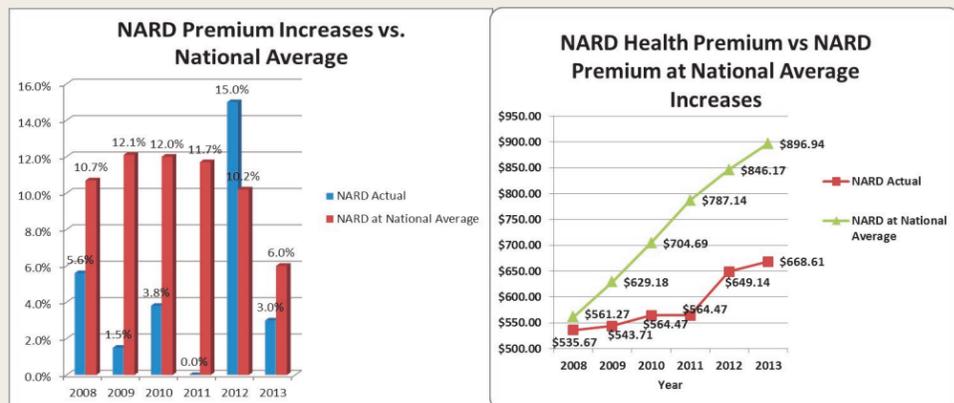
As we move forward, the challenges undoubtedly will be change and be different. For example, who would have predicted that we would go from record floods in 2011 to record drought in 2012? Calendar year 2013 has brought additional challenges, but fortunately not to the extremes of 2011 & 12. The NARD staff is excited to assist the local NRDs in their efforts to continue to protect lives, protect property and protect the future!

NARD Health Insurance Program

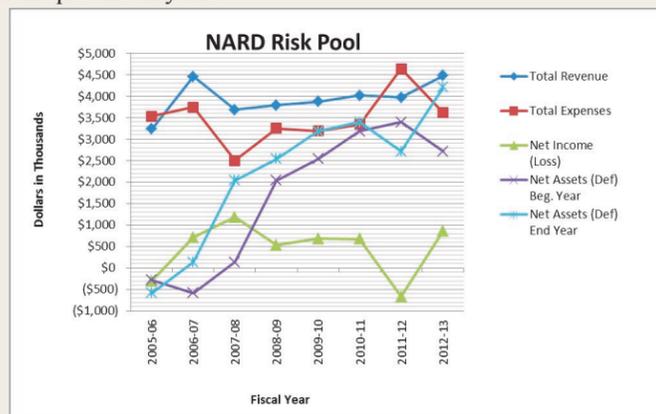
The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts has operated a licensed health risk pool for NRD employees since FY 2006-07. The program is governed by the NARD Risk Pool Board of Directors, which are same as the NARD board members. Over the last five years of the program, the annual health insurance premiums increases have been below 5% while the national annual averages have been between 10.7 and 12.1%. However, in FY 2011-12 we had a “drought year” with almost 5 times the number of people with high claims which resulted in over \$663,000 in losses for the fiscal year. In FY 12-13, claims were down which resulted in an \$862,000 gain.

In FY 2011-12 the aggregate claims were at 92% of maximum. In previous years, the program has been around 80%. In Fiscal Year 2011-12, there were nineteen individuals over \$50,000 in claims with one over \$400,000 and another over \$300,000. In previous years the program has had one to seven over \$50,000. In FY 2012-13, we had eleven claims over \$50,000, four of which were over \$100,000. Total aggregate claims were down to 65% of maximum.

The NARD Risk Pool board was considering leaving the rates at current levels for the next fiscal year. However, under Obama Care, there will be premium taxes that have to be paid to the federal government. The modest three percent rate increases is anticipated to cover those taxes. NRD employee’s involvement in wellness activities and programs reduces health care cost to local NRDs and taxpayers.



The first chart shows the NARD insurance premium increase compared with the national premium average for the past several years. The second chart shows the actual NARD insurance premium cost compared to what the NARD insurance premium would be with the national average increases. The third chart explains NARD Risk Pool income, expenses and assets over the past fiscal years.



Even though it was a bad year financially in fiscal year 2011-12, the program worked as it was set up to do – Work off reserves built up in the “good years” to cover losses in the “bad year”. Mid- American Benefits provided the third-party claims processing. Milt Willnerd, Willnerd and Associates, works with NARD to make sure all state and federal reports are filed correctly and in a timely fashion. The program is audited annually by independent auditors. In addition, the program is audited by the Nebraska Department of Insurance (NDI) every four years. The program has been audited twice by the NDI, most recently in July of 2013. There were no recommendations for changes from the NDI.

NRD Retirement Program

Thanks to the hard work of the NARD/NRD Employee Benefits Committee, the NRD Employees Retirement Program continues to grow and make improvements. The NARD 414(h) retirement fund grew 24.0% over the past fiscal year to \$23,798,143 as of June 30, 2013. The defined contribution program allows each employee to determine their own investments, providing the flexibility for the employee to determine the amount of risk and potential rate of return they feel most comfortable with.

The voluntary NARD 457 programs also grew 23.6% over the past year to \$2,256,223 as of June 30, 2013. The program allows NRD employees to set aside additional pre-tax income for retirement and has the same investment options as the NARD 414(h) plan. Mark Geist and Jonathan Buekleman with UBS Financial Services provide the Nationwide investment platform for the plans. Since they have been involved, the NARD investment levels have more than tripled. Benefit Plans Inc., of Omaha provides the reporting and compliance work for the plans.

NRD Wellness Program

NARD, WorkWell Inc and the Nebraska Safety Council has created an employee wellness program to promote a safe and healthy work environment. The wellness program provides tools and resources to NRD employees and board members to help them be successful in making healthy lifestyle choices.

The wellness program was created as an addition to the NRD’s existing Risk Pool Health Insurance Program administered by NARD. NARD board members and NRD managers saw the creation of a wellness program as a way to keep insurance premiums low and continue to save tax payer dollars. NARD provides assistance to the 23 NRD wellness delegates to help coordinate individual wellness programs. That main objective was to create a fun, friendly, non intimidating wellness program that challenges employees to meet their district wellness goals.

WorkWell Inc and NARD provided a health risk survey to the 350 district employees to identify risk factors and needs for a wellness program. Each wellness delegate used the survey results to develop a voluntary unique program specific to that districts wellness needs. NARD and the NRD offer a variety of wellness opportunities and challenges for all fitness levels. Many of the local district wellness programs promote community involvement through a variety of activities including: toy drive, collection for local food banks, and health screenings.

Participants in the wellness program have shown improvements in their health, including weight loss, increase in physical activity, healthier eating habits, increase in health screenings and flu shots. The positive results achieved by participating in the program motivate employees to continue making healthy lifestyle choices. As a result of the success of the NRDs wellness programs, many of the NRDs have received the Governors Excellence in Wellness Award.

Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts HALL OF FAME



Pictured above (left to right) are Joe Anderjaska, NARD Board President; Dick Mercer, Central Platte NRD; Ron Bishop, Central Platte NRD and Senator Bob Kremer. Bob Kremer accepted the award on behalf of his father, Senator Maurice Kremer.

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 recognized 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 individuals,” said Anderjaska.

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 by his son, former State Senator Bob 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!

Providing guidance with species selection and shelterbelt design under the Conservation Tree Program is a thriving part of NRD and NRCS partnerships. **Upper Niobrara White NRD** takes pride in assisting landowners with all types of tree plans from conservation shelterbelt plantings to reforestation projects and sold just under 149,000 trees and shrubs in 2013.

The **Middle Niobrara NRD** held the first meeting for the Long Pine Creek Watershed Plan. With over 40 landowners in attendance, groundwork was laid addressing erosion and bacteria issues in the 328,000 acre watershed. The MNRND has hired JEO consulting to guide the project which will be completed Fall 2014.

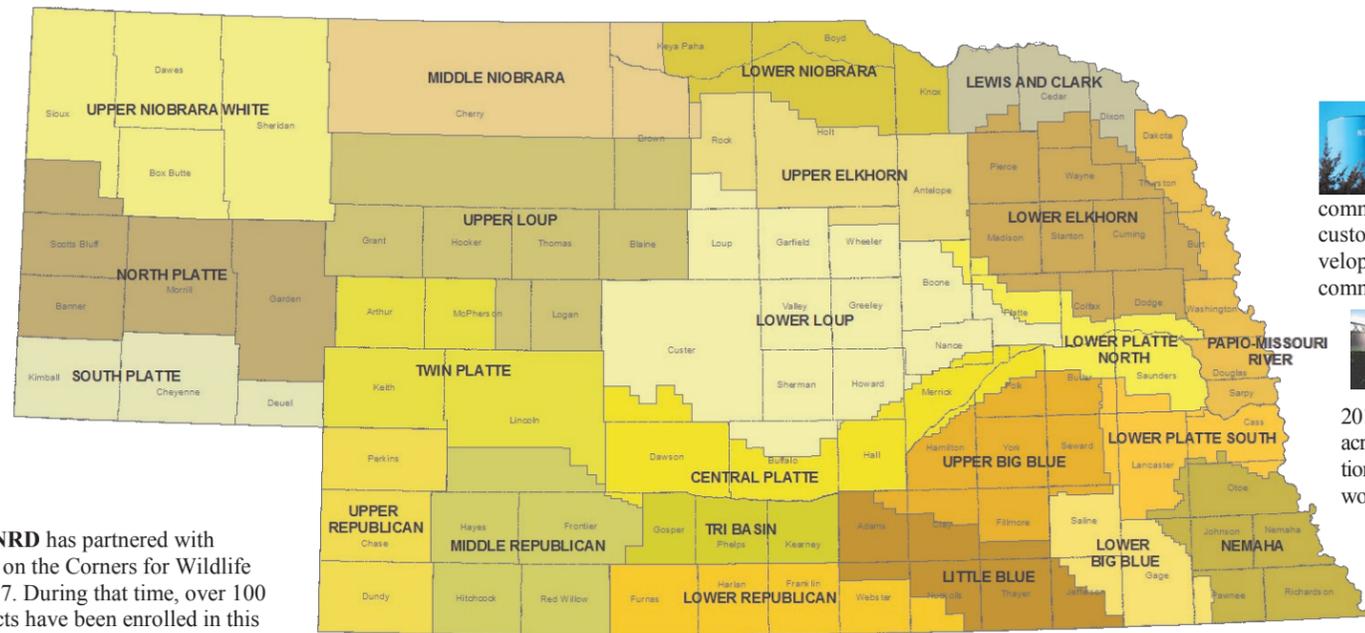
The **Upper Loup NRD** invested in 15 Watermark soil moisture sensors which are distributed throughout the District. The sensors measure water content in soil and make it easier for water management decisions. Good irrigation management will increase yields, improve crop quality, conserve water, save energy, decrease fertilizer requirements, and reduce non-point source pollution.

In an effort to provide the Board and public with the best water resources information possible, 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 **South Platte NRD** continues to seek the latest scientific information to understand its ground water supply and management options. And this year, the District will provide its 4 millionth conservation tree used for protection of properties and the future of wildlife.

The **Upper Republican NRD** in February 2013 began operating the Rock Creek Augmentation project in Dundy County. Approximately 16,000 acre feet are expected to be piped into Rock Creek, a tributary of the Republican River, to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact. More than 3,200 formerly irrigated acres have been retired as part of the project.

In 2012, **The Middle Republican NRD** completed the purchase of the Riverside Irrigation Company near Culbertson, NE. The surface water rights on 672 acres and about 600 certified ground water acres were retired. As the new owner, the MRNRD will provide this water to the State of Nebraska to be used for compact compliance when needed.



The **Twin Platte NRD** has partnered with Pheasants Forever on the Corners for Wildlife program since 1997. During that time, over 100 pivot corner projects have been enrolled in this program. This program has also stabilized highly erodible land, improving air and water quality in the District for future generations.

Upper Republican, Middle Republican, Lower Republican and Twin Platte NRDs in late 2012 joined together to form NCORPE (Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement Project). The new interlocal agency will construct and operate a \$120 million-\$130 million stream flow enhancement project benefitting both the Republican and Platte Rivers. Nearly 15,800 irrigated acres have been retired and water that otherwise would have been used to irrigate crops will increase stream flows to meet interstate and Nebraska water obligations. The project will prevent an irrigation shutdown and severe regulations on hundreds of thousands of acres in both river basins.

Tri-Basin NRD's North Dry Creek Augmentation Well Project is the first operational augmentation well in Nebraska. The well, pumped total of 374.44 acre-feet in 2012 and supplies groundwater that is used to augment streamflows of North Dry Creek. The project's purpose is to help Nebraska fulfill its commitment to the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program to reduce shortages to Platte River flow.

In a unique program the **Lower Republican NRD** saved 1095.73 Acre/feet of water for 2013. The Dry Year Lease Program, encouraged farmers to submit bids on acres that they would be willing to receive payment to NOT irrigate during the 2013 crop year. The cost of this program was funded by DNR in conjunction with the LRNRD.

The **Lower Loup NRD's** tree planting program is one of the largest in the state and covers the entire District. The NRD is made up of all or parts of 16 Nebraska counties. Landowners and NRD crews could choose from more than 40 species of trees and shrubs in 2012. There were 72,260 conservation trees planted across the LLNRD this year.

The **Central Platte NRD** has reached agreements with canal companies in Dawson County to undertake conjunctive use of those canals. These agreements protect the local ag economy, and 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 Conversion to irrigation too reduce conflicts between users in areas of low groundwater availability, low transmissivity, or poor geologic composition. It is also used to determine if the development would pose a threat to the soil resource and cause potential for irrigation runoff.

Soda Ash is spread to seal the lake bottom of Pioneer Trails Recreation Area managed by the **Upper Big Blue NRD** northeast of Aurora, Nebraska during May 2013.

The **Lower Big Blue NRD** is providing water to roughly one-third of the initial users, and pending final testing, anticipates serving the remaining initial users by the end of September. Overall, the rural water line will provide a safe, secure source of water to over 225 residences in southern Gage County through about 160 miles of pipe.

The **Lower Niobrara NRD** began construction in 1984 on the West Know Rural Water System which began operation on January 1, 1985 with two communities, Verdigre and Winnetoon 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 Elkhorn NRD** Board of Directors has voted to cancel the October 2013 Sign-up for New Groundwater Irrigated Acres for the 2014 growing season. Due to 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.

Construction is continuing on the **Papio-Missouri River NRD's** WP-5 Flood Control Reservoir and related outdoor recreational features. The new 135 acre reservoir, surrounded by an additional 335 acres of public parkland, just northwest of the Werner Park Baseball Stadium. The reservoir project will help protect lives and property downstream along the West Branch Papillion Creek, including the cities of Papillion and Bellevue. Opening of the recreation area is planned for 2015.

Construction starts this fall on 2½ miles of levee on Shell Creek north and east of Schuyler to help protect the city from flooding. The **Lower Platte North NRD** is Schuyler's local partner in the project, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the Federal sponsor.

The **Lower Platte South NRD**, partnering with the City of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska, completed the Antelope Valley Project in 2012. Besides creating a beautiful open waterway through the heart of Lincoln, the project removed several hundred acres and 800 homes and businesses from the floodplain. The project also brought many transportation and community revitalization benefits.

Projects such as this trail and outdoor classroom area completed in June for the village of Johnson help return tax funds collected to urban areas. **Nemaha NRD** matching funds up to \$25,000 are available for projects like this one through the Urban Special Project program.

The **Lewis & Clark NRD** is updating the Rules and Regulations of their Groundwater Management Plan to better deal with groundwater quantity issues. A Nebraska Environmental Trust grant will help fund test holes and monitoring wells with UNL Conservation & Survey Division to develop the hydrogeologic framework, monitor water quality and quantity, helping guide management decisions for the directors and landowners of LCNRD.

The Maskenthine Lake Recreation Area, near Stanton, NE, was constructed by the **Lower Elkhorn NRD** in 1975 for flood control and recreation. It was the first major flood control project in Northeast Nebraska's Elkhorn River Basin and also the first to receive a grant from the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Water Development Fund.

Land agents use rich stores of groundwater beneath Nebraska as a selling point to attract homesteaders.

Much of Nebraska and the Great Plains are devastated by the twin catastrophes of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl.

Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts are formed across Nebraska, county by county.

Use of groundwater to irrigate crops expands dramatically with the development of the center pivot and other technologies.

NRDs create groundwater management plans to protect the quantity and quality of Nebraska's groundwater.

Water, and effective policies to manage and protect it, is a major focus for NRDs.

1870

1920

1930

1940

1950

1960

1970



1980

1990

2000

2012

In 1872, Nebraskan J. Sterling Morton creates Arbor Day, the first holiday devoted to natural resources conservation.

In 1935 the U.S. Soil Conservation Service is established to assist farmers and help foster a new conservation ethic across the United States.

Devastating floods during the 1950's cause massive property damage and spur major flood control projects across Nebraska.

In 1972, Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts form and begin taking action to address a wide variety of natural resources challenges.

Because of it's value to farmers and urban centers, groundwater is commonly recognized as the state's most precious natural resources.

NRDs continue to play a leading role in addressing local natural resources concerns.