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# the VIADUCT

Lower Platte North Natural Resources District  
Winter 2025-2026

## Lower Platte North NRD Director and Former Manager Recognized for Conservation Leadership

The annual Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) Conference held in September each year, brings together Natural Resources Districts employees, directors and others integrally involved in conservation, technology and policymaking. At each conference, the NARD recognizes citizens across the state for their conservation efforts. This year, Mark Seier, Lower Platte North



Mark Seier, LPNNRD Director since 2015, speaks about his time on the board and his joy in teaching Science at Newman Grove during the 2025 Annual Conference.

NRD Sub-District 5 Director was honored as Nebraska's Director of the Year, and former Lower Platte North NRD General Manager, John Miyoshi was inducted into the NARD Hall of Fame.

For nearly five decades, **Mark Seier** has been a champion of conservation and education in the Newman Grove community. As a teacher, he played a central role in the Shell Creek Watershed Monitoring Program, where he guided hundreds of students through hands-on data collection leading to Shell Creek becoming the first waterway in Nebraska removed from the EPA's Impaired Waters list in 2019. This dedication to integrating student learning with real-world environmental impact has continued through his service as a director on the Lower Platte North NRD board since 2015, where he helps shape critical decisions *continued on page 3*

## Wahoo Creek Watershed Dams Making Progress

Construction progresses on sites 26A, 26B and 27 of the Wahoo Creek Watershed Project, though greater than normal rainfall slowed the pace over the summer months. The crew from Thompson Construction Inc. has been hard at work on the first three sites (26A, 26B and 27) near Prague, guided by the experts at Olsson, the engineering consultant for the project. The Wahoo Creek Watershed Project is an effort led by the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District to reduce flood damages to agriculture, county roads and bridges, urban land, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife and aquatic habitats within the watershed.

Thompson Construction Inc. successfully installed the



Thompson Construction, Inc. works on the plunge pool spillway outlet for site 27.

24-inch principal spillway pipe at Site 27 in June, with the riser construction nearly completed. Following suit, the principal spillway at Site 26 was installed in November, with its riser construction next on the list. Construction of sites 26A, 26B, and 27 are set to be completed by October of 2026.

The overall project includes nine dams throughout the watershed. The estimated total plan cost is \$19.7 million, made possible through a funding partnership that includes the NRCS WFPO/RCPD programs and the Nebraska JEDI program. Easement acquisition on the remaining six sites are planned for the winter of 2025 with construction on the next sites to begin in the fall of 2026.



Lower Platte North NRD  
Board & Staff

Board Member.....	Subdistrict
Lon Olson, Fremont .....	1
Anthony Hanson, Fremont.....	1
John Goldsberry, Fremont .....	2
Bill Saeger, Fremont (Secretary).....	2
Dave Saalfeld, North Bend.....	3
Andrew Tonnies, North Bend .....	3
Chris Yosten, Schuyler.....	4
Matt Bailey, Schuyler .....	4
Mark Seier, Newman Grove (Treasurer).....	5
David Lawrence, Columbus.....	5
Joe Birkel, David City.....	6
Robert Hilger, David City .....	6
Ryan Engel, Fremont.....	7
Ryan Sabatka, Weston (Chairman).....	7
Jerry Johnson, Wahoo .....	8
Roger Harders, Wahoo .....	8
Duane Johnson, Mead .....	9
Robert Meduna, Wahoo (Vice-Chair).....	9
Thomas McKnight, Fremont .....	at large
Board of Directors meetings are held on the second Monday of each month.	

Staff Member.....	Position
Sydney Abbott.....	Education Coordinator
Aurora Alvarez.....	Water Resources Tech
Daryl Andersen.....	Water Resources Manager
Brandon Beethe.....	GIS/Grants Coordinator
Jill Breunig .....	Bookkeeping Dept. Head/ Admin. Assistant
Adam Brockmann....	NRD/NRCS Conservation Tech
Ryan Chapman.....	Assistant Manager
Sean Elliott.....	Projects/Rural Water Manager
Eric Gottschalk.....	General Manager
Bob Heimann.....	O & M Manager
Karen Henrichson.....	Dept./Admin Assistant
Jake Maslonka..	Water Quality Program Coordinator
Dave Moore .....	O & M Technician
Sean O'Brien .....	O & M Technician
Dave Odvody .....	Recreation Facilitator
Jake Pittman .....	Water Resources Tech
Lacey Sabatka .....	Information Coordinator
Jon Speichinger .....	Recreation Supervisor/O&M

NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant.....	County
Kristin Miller .....	Butler and Colfax County
Jessica Marty .....	Dodge and Saunders Counties

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LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD  
protecting lives | protecting property | protecting the future  
1616 County Road 17, Wahoo  
(402) 443-4675 | [www.lpnrd.org](https://www.lpnrd.org)

From the Desk of  
the General Manager



Eric Gottschalk

My Stanleys

When walking into my office, one thing you may notice is my Stanley thermos collection. These vintage “Unbreakable” bottles from the 1930’s through the 1990’s represent a timeline of U.S. work ethic. Each carrying the weight of a different decade yet the same simple promise: keep working, keep going. When looking at them, I don’t just see steel and paint—I see early mornings, cold hands wrapped around a warm cup of coffee, and the steady rhythm of an honest days work. That feeling mirrors my days with the Lower Platte North NRD, where conservation isn’t a slogan but a daily commitment shaped by boots on the ground and pride in doing the job right.

The thermoses from the 1930s and 1940s feel especially resolute. Built in an era defined by hardship and sacrifice, they remind me of a time when work meant endurance and responsibility to something bigger than yourself. Those decades echo the foundational conservation principles we still carry at the NRD today: respect and protect our resources and plan for tomorrow, even when today is demanding. Like those early Stanleys, the work wasn’t flashy—but it lasted.

The 1950s and 1960s pieces reflect a period of growth and confidence. Their designs are a bit more refined, a little brighter, much like the postwar optimism that pushed communities



The collection of Stanleys.

to invest in infrastructure and stewardship. When looking at these thermoses, I think of teamwork—crews surveying land, managing watersheds, and building systems supporting both agriculture and nature. At the Lower Platte North NRD, that same cooperative spirit shows up every day as our staff balances progress with preservation.

By the time I reach the 1970s and 1980s thermoses, there’s a sense of practicality shaped by experience. These decades understood conservation requires adaptation—responding to new challenges while holding onto core values. The scratches and wear on these bottles remind me of days in the field, under wide Nebraska skies, solving problems in real time. Our NRD staff embodies that same grit, adjusting methods while never losing sight of why our work matters.

The 1990s thermos brings the collection closer to the present, bridging tradition and modern responsibility. It represents continuity—the idea that while tools evolve, the meaning and value of an honest day’s work does not. Standing alongside the rest, it reinforces why our work with the Lower Platte North NRD feels so personal. Like those Stanley thermoses, our conservation efforts are meant to endure, quietly supporting those who rely on the land and water, one steady day at a time.

Eric Gottschalk, LPNDRD General Manager

Please note in this issue: Lower Platte North Natural Resources District may be abbreviated to Lower Platte North NRD, LPNDRD or NRD.



Recognition, continued from page 1 on water management, flood damage reduction, soil health and educational outreach, inspiring future generations of environmental stewards.

Former Lower Platte North NRD General Manager, **John Miyoshi** served as a respected leader in Nebraska’s NRD system for over thirty years. With experience as the Assistant Manager prior, John’s leadership left a lasting mark on both the district and the broader conservation community. He played a key role in introducing GIS technology to the NRD system, and forged crucial partnerships at all levels to secure funding



Governor Jim Pillen presents John Miyoshi, former LPNNRD General Manager, with the NARD Hall of Fame award at the 2025 Annual Conference.

and collaboration for projects including the development of Lake Wanahoo (as part of the Sand Creek Environmental Restoration Project), the Western Sarpy/ Clear Creek Flood Protection Levee, the Merlin England Flood Control Project, the Schuyler 205 Shell Creek Levee, two rural water projects serving Bruno and Colon, and federal support for the Upper Wahoo Creek Watershed flood reduction dams.

Mark Seier’s and John Miyoshi’s accomplishments both exemplify the mission of Nebraska’s NRDs – protecting lives, protecting property, and protecting the future, and inspire those working to conserve Nebraska’s natural resources.

## Order Trees and Shrubs For Spring Delivery

Enhance your property, establish a wildlife habitat, or reinforce an existing windbreak with the right trees and shrubs from the Lower Platte North NRD. The longest running program has contributed to nearly a million trees and shrubs being planted throughout the district. These trees have helped replace trees lost to farming and urban development. They also help protect precious topsoil from wind and water erosion.

A variety of species are available to choose from such as pines, spruces, maples, and various shrubs. If you are not sure what species will thrive on your land, the NRD can

provide guidance to help you choose the best species for shade, shelter, protection and more. Trees and shrubs must be purchased in bundles of 25 and are available at just \$1.35 each. The NRD also offers the option to rent a two-man tree planter, while larger plantings of 150 trees and/or shrubs can be planted by the NRD.

To place an order or request guidance for a planting, call the NRD at 402-443-4675. You can also visit [lpnnrd.org](http://lpnnrd.org) to see the full list of trees and shrubs available and place an order online.

## Lower Platte North NRD Announces New Grass Drill Available for Rent

With the support of a Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) grant, the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District (LPNNRD) recently acquired a new Great Plains No-Till grass drill. The new equipment, which received 60% of its funding from the grant, is now available to landowners to rent in Platte County.

This new drill is a valuable tool for planting native grasses, grains, and legumes, all critical for projects focused on soil health, wildlife habitat, and erosion control. The drill’s three separate seed boxes make it highly versatile, capable of planting fluffy native grass seed, small seed like alfalfa and clovers, or coarser grain-type seed in a single pass.

The LPNNRD has two grass drills available for rent throughout the district. This newest one is located at Rosendahl Farms Feed & Seed, 35884 175th Ave., approximately nine miles north of Columbus. Rental rates are \$10/acre plus a \$25/day charge, with a minimum charge of \$75. For information on availability, please contact Rosendahl Farms Feed & Seed directly at 402-564-4237.

When renting, customers can receive assistance from our drill renters to properly set the equipment for their specific seed mixtures. If you have any additional questions about the grass drill program, please contact LPNNRD Operations & Maintenance Manager Bob Heimann at 402-443-4675.

## Supporting Pollinators One Native Nook at a Time

The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District (LPNNRD) is excited to roll out a new small-scale habitat program to area residents, called the Native Nook. This program aims to educate on the importance of using native plant species for building healthy soils; conserving and protecting our ground and surface water; and providing a habitat for pollinators and other wildlife.

Once approved, participants will receive seeds to cover a 100 square foot area (10 foot by 10 foot). Currently, there are two options for seed mixes *continued on page 6*







# Groundwater Management

## Planning for Spring Nitrogen Application

To ensure the protection of our groundwater, the Lower Platte North NRD reminds producers with sandy soils to take note of nitrogen application restrictions. The NRD's Groundwater Management Plan requires that no nitrogen application may occur until after March 1.

Nitrogen moves more quickly through sandy soils than it does in heavier clay or loamy soils. When fertilizer is applied too early in these sensitive areas, snowmelt and rain can wash the nitrogen deep into the ground and into the water table. This not only leads to wasted input costs for the producer but also contributes to rising nitrate levels in our

drinking water.

By waiting until after March 1st, producers ensure the nitrogen remains in the upper soil profile where it is most available for the upcoming growing season. This practice is a key component of our collective effort to build healthy soils and protect Nebraska's water quality.

If you are unsure if your fields fall within these sandy soil restriction zones, you can visit <https://lpnnrd.org/projects-and-programs/water-management/> or reach out to the NRD office at 402-443-4675 for more information.

## 2026 Nitrogen Certification Classes

The Lower Platte North NRD has updated its Nitrogen Certification and Water Management classes to a more interactive, discussion-based format for the 2026 season. These sessions now allow producers to explore options in a collaborative environment before applying them to their own operations. By prioritizing group dialogue, the new format encourages producers to share insights and learn directly from the real-world experiences of their peers and research from UNL.

Obtaining NRD certification remains a primary requirement for all operators of irrigation, municipal, or industrial well systems within the Groundwater Management Area. This is mandatory for anyone using commercial or organic fertilizers, including those involved in the decision-

making process for nitrogen application rates. If you are a landowner who delegates the application or prescription of nitrogen, your tenant or hired manager must obtain the necessary certification to stay in compliance.

Certification is valid for four years, after which recertification is required. The NRD offers multiple classes across the district and encourages all new producers to attend an in-person session. If you have been previously certified, an online or take-home test designed by the LPNNRD can serve as a convenient alternative for recertification.

A list of classes is provided below. If you have questions or are unsure if you need to renew your certification, please contact the NRD at 402-443-4675.

Date & Time	Location
Tuesday, February 17 at 10 a.m.	Columbus Public Library, 2500 14th St., Suite 2, Columbus
Wednesday, February 25 at 1 p.m.	Lindsay Town Hall, 121 Pine Street, Lindsay
Tuesday, March 10 at 6 p.m.	Eastern Nebraska Research, Extension and Education Center, 1071 County Road G, Ithaca

*Native Nook, continued from page 3* available: a wildflower mix containing sunflower, blackeyed susan, wild bergamot, a variety of coneflowers, and others; and a wildflower and grass mixture containing little bluestem, sunflower, coneflowers and more. Staff from the LPNNRD will be available to assist with ground preparation and

habitat upkeep questions.

To learn more about this program and to apply visit <https://lpnnrd.org/projects-and-programs/conservation-programs/pollinator-program/> or call the LPNNRD at 402-443-4675.





LOWER PLATTE NORTH NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

# Annual Report

## 2025

## FISCAL YEAR 2025 - IN BRIEF

### SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

In partnership with the Nebraska Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Nebraska Department of Water Environment and Energy (NDWEE), the NRD's Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP) continued to provide cost-share funds to landowners to construct terraces, waterways, tree planting and a variety of other conservation practices. The NRD allocated \$171,348.00 for conservation work under the NDWEE Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program for FY2025. The NRD also utilized local funding for special projects, grade stabilization structures, and more. Grant funds and local funds were also utilized in partnership with the Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group for a number of special projects such as grade stabilization structures to protect the integrity of a variety of wetlands, county road/bridge infrastructure and working lands, and septic system upgrades to protect water quality within the watershed.



### WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY

The NRD continued its efforts to safeguard vital groundwater resources through quality and quantity monitoring programs, NRD certification classes, abandoned well plugging, chemigation system inspections, irrigated acre certification and more. The district continues soil and water sampling across the district to help in the management of contaminants in groundwater. Measuring water levels along with real-time equipment on monitoring wells assist in managing groundwater quantity. Future studies will review the real time data collection along with updated geological information. The district completed the age dating project of the groundwater and is wrapping up cost-share funding on best management practices in nitrogen management areas. The NRD plans on completing the update on the Groundwater Management Plan with current information the first part of 2026. The certification classes will be updated with interactive activities and beneficial information for the producer.



### RURAL WATER SYSTEMS

The NRD's rural water systems – one connecting Bruno and David City and the other connecting Colon and Wahoo – finished their 19th year of operation in FY2025, providing Bruno and Colon residents with a stable water service with safe, clean drinking water. Along with dealing with aging infrastructure, the big challenge is keeping the utility service economically feasible for both customer and utility. The rural water district upgraded their meter reading hardware and billing software to better help with overall efficiency. Additionally, the NRD has been in contact with representatives from the village of Abie about connecting to the Bruno RWD. The NRD and Abie agreed to contract with JEO Consulting to develop a plan and scope for proceeding forward.

### TREE PLANTING

The NRD's tree planting program is one of the most visible and popular programs. In 2025, 10,175 trees were ordered, with 3,581 of those planted by the district. The NRD also donated 1,030 trees for educational events throughout the district. Since 1972, more than 960,400 trees have been planted through the program.

### EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The NRD offers a variety of hands-on activities, classroom presentations, field trip opportunities, and other events for students to learn about the environment and natural resources. Over 3,504 youth, from preschool to college-level age and nearly 326 adults have participated in educational activities and programs during FY2025. Activities included classroom presentations, the annual Spring Conservation Sensation, outdoor activities, night events, land judging competitions, monthly ongoing presentations, and other various events throughout the

*Continued on page 6*



# FY2025 – IN BRIEF

continued

district. A new grant opportunity was introduced for area high school students offering up to \$1,500 to individuals involved in FFA, 4-H, or other groups tailored to improving natural resources and their community. Three students were awarded grant funding for their projects.



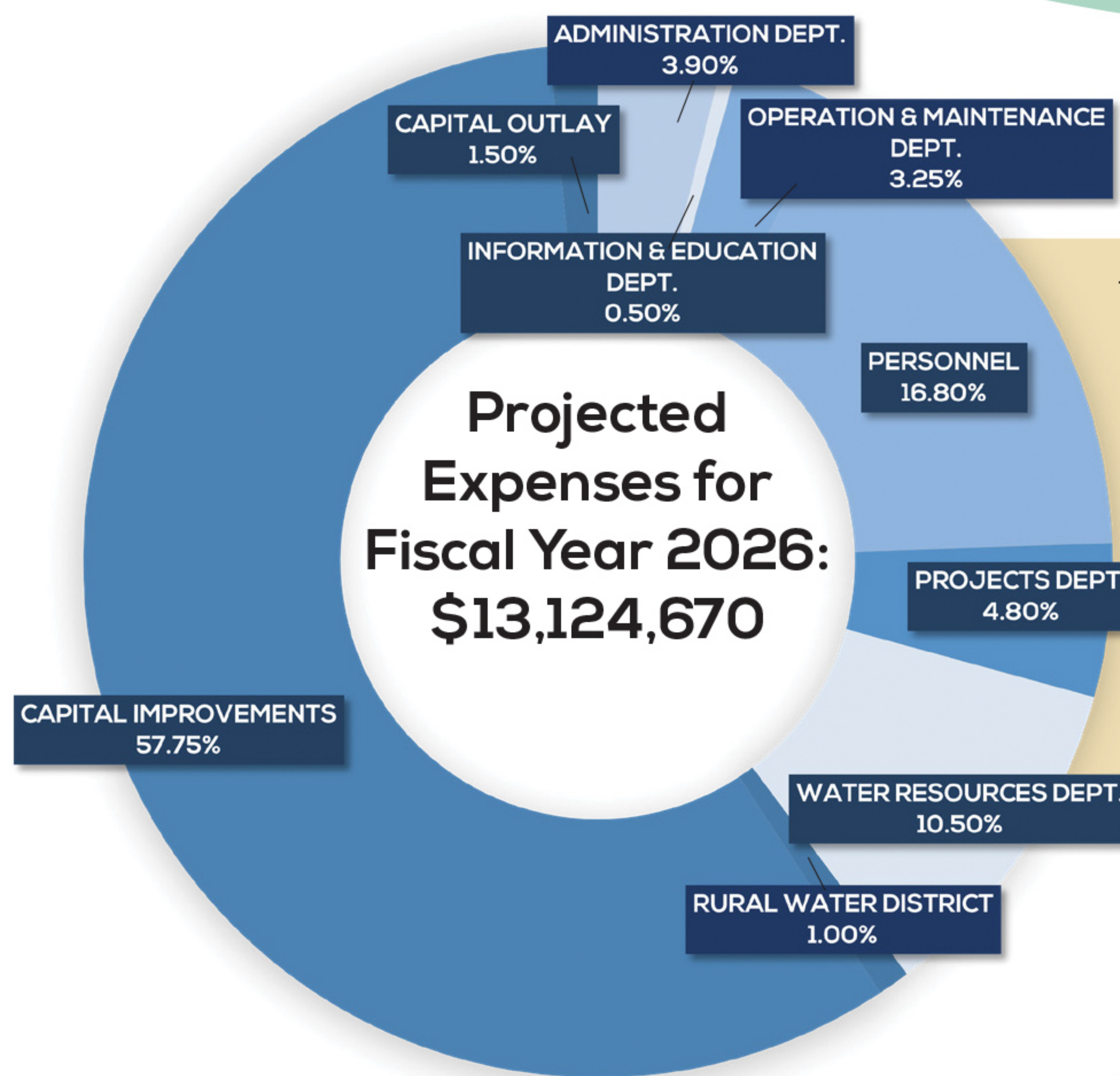
## RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Czechland and Homestead Lakes continued with a similar amount of use during 2025. At Czechland Lake, the District provides 11 RV pads with electricity and 3 pads without electricity. Nine of the 11 pads have 50/30 amp service available. The Nebraska Game & Parks Fishery Division stocked Czechland with 1,700 Channel Catfish and 1,575 Walleye in 2025. Czechland and Lake Wanahoo have incorporated a pay app called "Set Your Sites" if you rather not pay by check or cash. Lake Wanahoo continues to be a valuable asset to the District and recreation enthusiasts around the region. The recreation area has hosted numerous outdoor education events and athletic events. The property provides wonderful wildlife habitat for youth mentor hunting administered through the Nebraska Game and Parks' PATH program (Passing Along the Heritage). There are three deer blinds on the property provided by the Big Game Conservation Association and two Duck blinds provide by the Wahoo Ducks Unlimited Chapter.

# Lower Platte North Natural Resources District

# Annual Report

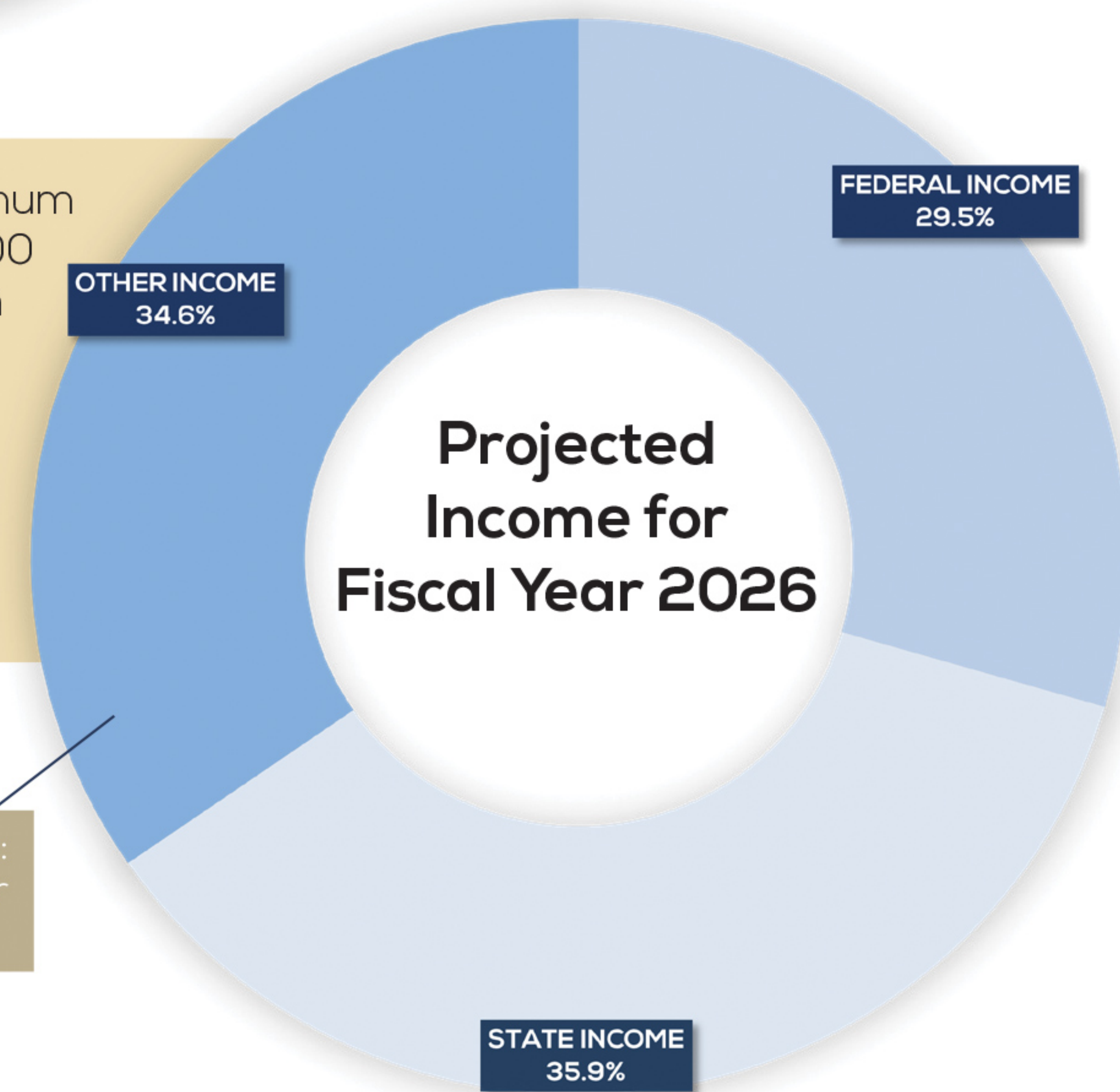
## 2025



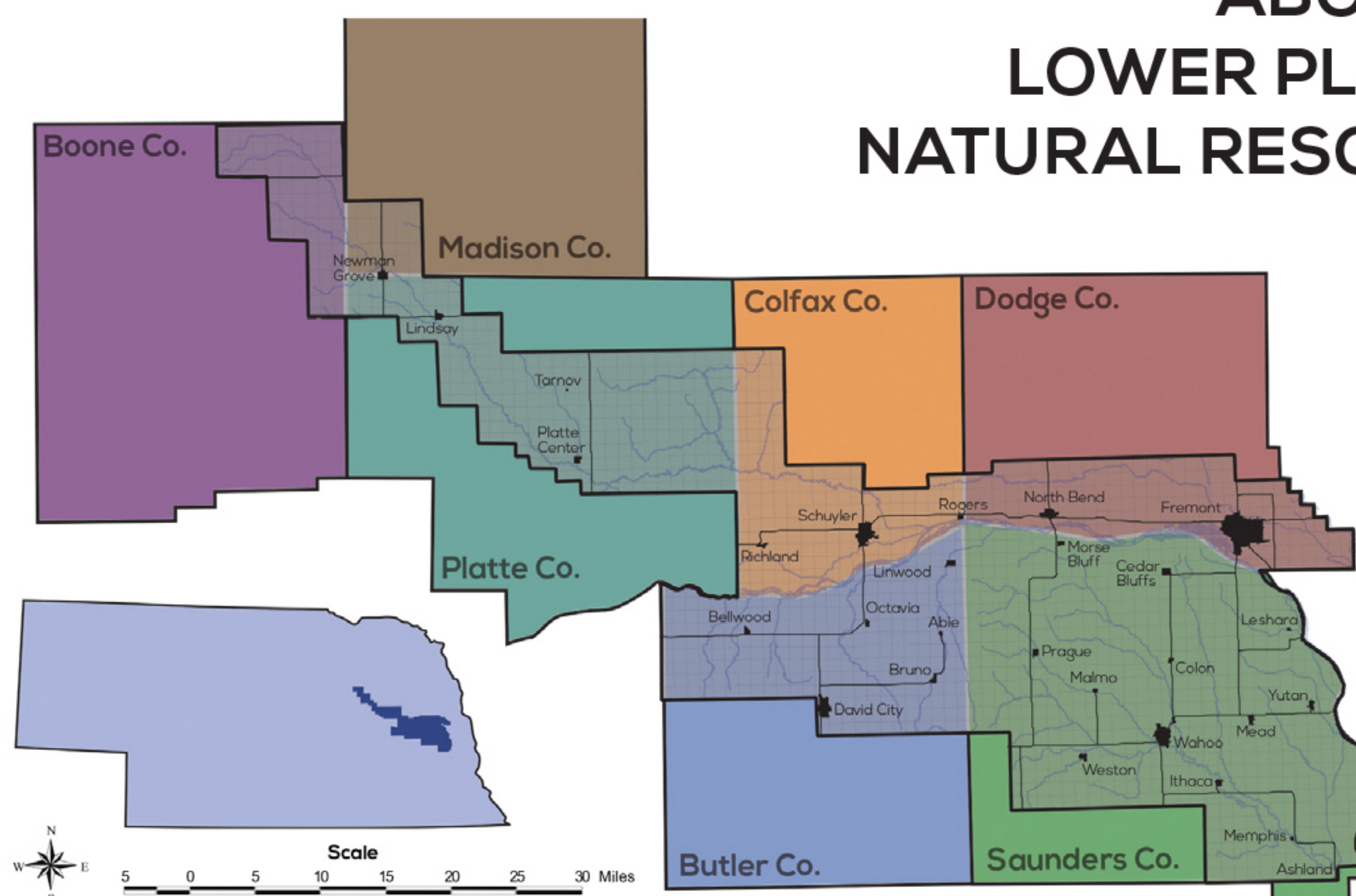
The Lower Platte North NRD is funded by a combination of property taxes and grants from local, State and Federal sources. For fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026), the district's projected budget is \$13,124,670 of which \$3,480,715 is required from the district's local tax levy. FY26 asking has been the exact same for 10 years.

State statute allows NRDs a maximum property tax rate of 5.5 cents per \$100 of valuation. The Lower Platte North tax levy is 0.024053 cents per \$100 valuation for 2025, which equates to approximately \$36.08 in property tax for a \$150,000 home. An owner of farm land valued at \$7,000 per acre will pay \$1.69/acre.

Other Income section includes: Local Income and Rural Water Income.



## ABOUT THE LOWER PLATTE NORTH NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT



The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District, based in Wahoo, covers parts of seven counties in east-central Nebraska. There are 23 NRDs in Nebraska, charged with developing and protecting the state's natural resources.

In pursuing this mission, the districts often partner

with landowners and other government agencies, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Lower Platte North NRD is governed by 19 locally-elected directors from nine subdistricts, and employs 15 full-time staff members (see current NRD directors and staff on page 2). The district is funded by a combination of property taxes and grants from local, State and Federal sources.