

KNOW YOUR NRD



CENTRAL PLATTE
Natural Resources District
Grand Island, NE

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

Summer 2013

NRD QUICK FACTS:

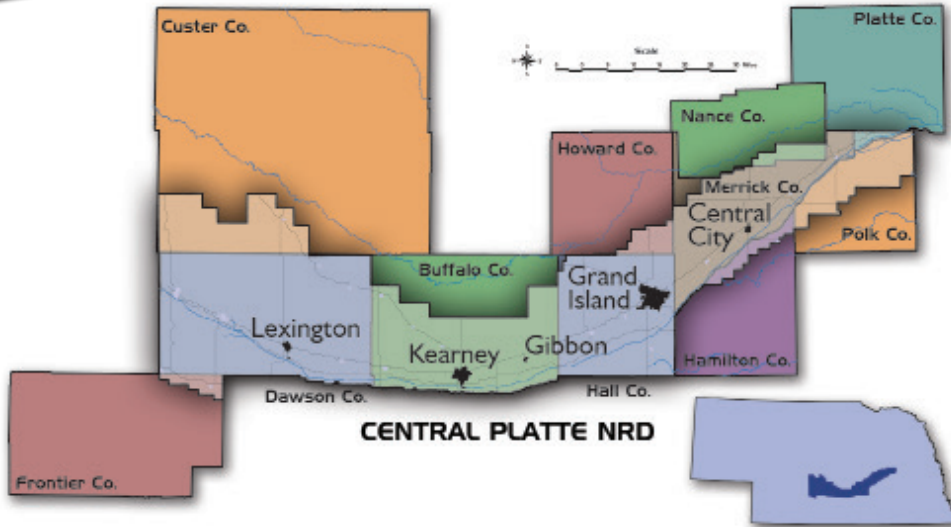
CPNRD manages natural resources for all or parts of 11 counties along the Platte River.

RIVER SYSTEM

- Platte River: 205 miles
- North Channel: 49.9 miles
- Wood River: 173 miles

IRRIGATION

- * 21,002 irrigation wells
- * One million acres certified
- * To ensure *QUANTITY* of ground water, 575 wells are monitored each spring & fall.
- * To ensure *QUANTITY* of ground water, 1/3 of those wells are monitored each year for nitrates.



Protecting Lives...

with Groundwater Management

Central Platte NRD's Groundwater Quality Management Plan has been in effect since 1988. Since that time, nitrates have been lowered from an alarming average of 19.24 ppm (parts per million) in 1988 to 15.05 ppm in 2012. The Department of Environmental Quality recommends an average of 10 ppm, so the District still has work to do. However, the decrease does confirm that the management program is working.

Landowners and operators are applauded for the water quality and water conservation practices that have been implemented over the years.

The Program provides recommendations on how to apply, when to apply and the amount of nitrogen fertilizer on corn, sorghum, and potatoes. The plan uses a phased approach, with lesser restrictions in areas that are not high in nitrates & additional regulations applying to areas with higher nitrate concentrations in the groundwater. Phase regulations:

Phase I: between 0-7.5 ppm

Phase II: between 7.6-15 ppm

Phase III: 15.1 ppm or more

Phase IV: areas where nitrate levels are not declining at an acceptable rate. There aren't any areas of the NRD under Phase IV at this time.

Producers in Phase II & Phase III are required to submit reports of water, fertilizer usage and yield in the spring and fall. CPNRD measures wells in Phase II & III areas through the metering program to determine water usage. **For more information, call the NRD or visit: www.cpnrd.org.**



Protecting Property...

with Flood Control

A majority of the NRD's flood control projects are completed or well underway. With this luxury, the year of 2013 has seen moderate rainfall without much concern of flooding in the District.

The NRD's largest project is the Wood River Flood Control Project. It was completed in 2005, just a few weeks prior to the 2005 flood. It continues to move floodwater away from Grand Island and Hall County. After the 2005 flood, the Corps of Engineers analysis estimated that the Project alone prevented over \$24 million in damage that first year of operation.

Landowners have benefitted from other smaller scale projects such as Buffalo Creek in Dawson County, Warm Slough in Hall County and
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Protecting Property with Flood Control

Warm Slough/Dry Run in Merrick County. The District has built 30 flood control structures, as well as snagged and cleared over 500 miles of rivers and streams.

In 2012, the board adopted a Hazard Mitigation Plan for counties that were not protected if an emergency or natural disaster would arise. The NRD developed the Plan with the Nebraska and Federal Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA, FEMA).

Ten of the NRD's 11 counties approved the Plan and would receive assistance if a disaster or an emergency would arise. Buffalo County did not participate.



*Channel of the Wood River
Flood Control Project*

Protecting the Future...

with Canal Rehabilitation

The NRD has been proactive in creating new ways to increase irrigation efficiency, protect water supplies, and increase flows to the Platte River by working with the canal companies in Dawson County.

In 2010, CPNRD purchased the Six Mile Canal in Gothenburg. The purchase was the first-ever buyout of a surface water canal in Nebraska and is touted as a win-win situation for both the farmers and the NRD. The buy out allowed the NRD to return water to the Platte River to protect endangered species and improved public safety. Farmers along the canal converted from surface water irrigation to more efficient groundwater irrigation, and it allowed them to put more crops into production.

The NRD now has management/lease agreements with Cozad Canal, Thirty Mile Canal, and Southside (Orchard Alfalfa) Canal. All of the contracts allow the NRD to increase water flows to the river as required by the Platte River Program to protect endangered species. The partnership with Cozad Ditch Company is to manage the canal and to lease surface water. The partnership with Thirty Mile Canal includes a purchase agreement for half interest in the irrigation system's water rights and value of buildings and equipment. The partnership with Southside Canal is a 50% management-lease agreement, with the NRD paying half the cost of operations and receiving half the revenues.

Once the canal rehabilitations in Dawson County are completed, former general manager Ron Bishop estimates that CPNRD will have between 3,000-4,000 ac/ft of excess flows to use for endangered species requirements and other water agreements.

with Future Projects

In June 2013, the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District board approved plans to build a new project called the J-2 Reregulating Reservoir. This agreement allows excess flows from the CNPPID's supply canals to be stored and later put into the Platte River when needed to meet U.S. Fish & Wildlife target flows.

The excess flows will be used as credit for requirements of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Project. Central Platte NRD is in line to receive 10% of the reservoir water; which will provide the NRD with up to 2,000 ac-ft of water per year.

MORE CPNRD FACTS...

- Sold 3.5 million trees since 1973.
- Sold 521 miles of weed barrier since 1991.
- CPNRD fire crew has conducted over 130 prescribed burns since 2004.

EDUCATION

The NRD provides natural resources information to youth and adults through the following educational events:

YOUTH

- *Nebraska Children's Ground Water Festival
- *Outdoor Classrooms
- *Regional & State Envirothon
- *Regional & State Land and Range Judging Contests
- *Arbor Day Tree Program
- *Provides (10) \$1,000 college scholarships annually.

ADULTS

- *Groundwater Guardian Team- Outdoor Learning Area at the Nebraska State Fair
- *Chemigation Compliance
- *Nitrogen Management Testing

The NRDs help Nebraskans respond to natural resources challenges through local control and local solutions. The NRDs boundaries were formed along major Nebraska river basins. Each NRD is governed by a locally elected board of directors.

Visit: www.nrdnet.org for more information about all 23 NRDs.