

Director of the Year - Ed Kyes



Kyes with NARD Director of the Year Award. From left: Marilyn, Ed, Steve (son) and Amy Kyes (daughter-in-law)

Ed and his wife Marilyn are dedicated to education. As prior school bus drivers, the Kyes help with education activities hosted by the NRD. They have volunteered for the Nebraska Children’s Groundwater Festival as classroom guides since the NRD began hosting the event in 2005. They represent CPNRD by volunteering to pick up recyclables for Clean Community Center at Husker Harvest Days and the Nebraska State Fair.

Habitat Happenings - Grasslands Under Threat

Cattle outnumber people 4:1 in Nebraska. The livestock industry powers Nebraska’s agriculture economy with \$6.5 billion in cattle sales annually. Thousands of family ranches manage the vibrant grasslands throughout Nebraska and recognize that without management of their grassland, their ranches will not remain profitable. This has helped instill tremendous land stewardship in these individuals. Unfortunately, Eastern redcedar trees are spreading at an unprecedented rate across Nebraska’s grasslands threatening the economic profitability of this industry.

Eastern redcedar trees can live up to 75 years and produce thousands of seeds each year; which are then spread across the grasslands by birds and animals. They have spread at a significantly higher rate since the 1990s. As more acres are encroached the seed source also increases, leading to a decrease in grass and hay needed for the cattle food source. It’s estimated that 7.5 million acres are at risk in the near term to woody invasion. In 2019, this invasion resulted in a loss of over 530,000 tons of herbaceous productivity. The USDA’s estimate for “good” forage grade grass/hay ranged from \$125 - \$145 per ton in September 2021. This productivity loss translates to a \$76.9 million dollar annual loss in revenue for just the grass/hay production. The full economic impact including beef production is estimated to exceed \$150 million annually.

The invasion of grasslands can also have tremendous impacts on grassland birds like pheasants, prairie chickens and Western Meadowlarks. A recent analysis by Cornell University highlighted that grassland birds have been particularly impacted with 59% of species experiencing population declines. Western Meadowlarks experienced the steepest declines with a 25% decline in population over the last 55 years. This low density infestation is especially problematic for area-sensitive species like Greater Prairie Chicken and Sharp-Tailed Grouse. These species require thousands of acres of grasslands in a localized area.

Help is on the way! The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partners including Ducks Unlimited, NRCS, NRDs, NGPC, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and many others are leveraging resources to help landowners address Eastern redcedar encroachment with mechanical removal, prescribed fire and chemical application.

The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture is a public/private partnership that works with federal and state agencies, local Natural Resources Districts, non-government organizations and private landowners to develop “win-win” opportunities to protect, restore and enhance wetlands and grasslands throughout Nebraska. To learn more visit [www.rwbjv.org](http://www.rwbjv.org) and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.



Important Dates

* January 1	Nitrogen Certification test due
* February 8	Water Programs Update- Crane Trust Nature & Visitors Center
* March 31	Crop Report due for Groundwater Management Program
* April 15	CPNRD-Ron Bishop Memorial College Scholarship applications due
* May 17	Nebraska Children’s Groundwater Festival
* June 1	Chemigation applications due
* Sept 1- March 1	Transfer applications for irrigated acres accepted
* September 15	Chemigation reinspections must be completed
* Nov 1 - April 1	Tree and weed barrier orders accepted

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Board of Directors

Subdistrict

At-Large	Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island (Treasurer)	
1	Jay Richeson, Gothenburg	Brian Keiser, Gothenburg
2	Dwayne Margritz, Lexington	Tom Downey, Lexington
3	Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek (Secretary)	Steve Sheen, Kearney
4	Lon Bohn, Gibbon	Ryan Kegley, Kearney
5	Deb VanMatre, Gibbon	Jim Bendfeldt, Kearney
6	Jerry Milner, Grand Island	Mick Reynolds, Wood River (Chairman)
7	Jerry Wiese, Grand Island (Vice-Chairman)	Ed Stoltenberg, Cairo
8	LeRoy Arends, Grand Island	Alicia Haussler, Grand Island
9	Ed Kyes, Central City	Doug Reeves, Central City
10	Chuck Maser, Grand Island	Barry Obermiller, Grand Island

Staff

General Manager: Lyndon Vogt  
Assistant Manager: Jesse Mintken  
Administrative Assistant: Kelly Cole  
Communications Assistant: Brody Vorderstrasse  
Cozad Ditch Manager: Michael Schmeeckle  
Cozad Ditch Rider: Jake Laird  
Easement Habitat Specialist: Krystal Church  
Easement Habitat Specialist: Elison Wagner  
GIS Coordinator: Angela Warner  
GIS Image Analyst: Luke Zakrzewski  
Hydrologist: Brandi Flyr  
Information/Education Specialist: Marcia Lee  
Precision Conservation Specialist: Vacant  
Projects Assistant: Tom Backer

Range Management Specialist: David Carr  
Resources Conservationist: Bill Hiatt  
Resources Conservationist: Shane Max  
Secretary/CPNRD: Deb Jarzynka  
Secretary/NRCS-Grand Island: Colleen Buettner  
Secretary/NRCS-Central City: Kyla Friedrichsen  
Secretary/NRCS-Lexington: Samantha Keith  
Secretary/NRCS-Kearney: Shelly Lippincott  
Secretary/Thirty Mile Irrigation District: Marci Ostergard  
Thirty Mile Irrigation District Manager: Jim Harris  
Thirty Mile Irrigation District Technician: Mike Ostergard  
UNL/CPNRD Demo Project Coordinator: Dean Krull  
Water Quality Specialist: Tricia Dudley  
Water Resources Specialist: Dan Clement  
Water Resources Technician: Courtney Widup



IN PERSPECTIVE

Central Platte NRD Newsletter

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215 Kaufman Ave Grand Island NE (308) 385-6282 cpnrd.org

CPNRD’s Water Programs Update - February 8

Impacts of climate change and actions that can be taken to address it will be one of the topics featured at Central Platte NRD’s *Water Programs Update* to be held on Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at the Crane Trust Nature and Visitors Center near Alda, NE. The event will be held from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Guest speaker Martha Shulski, Nebraska State Climatologist, will present her study of climate data that indicates changes in temperature and precipitation patterns that will directly affect many areas of Nebraska agricultural production by mid-century including a longer growing season.

Don Blankenau, Attorney with Blankenau Wilmoth Jarecke of Lincoln will explain Nebraska’s drainage law. Other reports will include groundwater and nitrate level readings throughout the District, soil health programs, the fall whooping crane migration and restoration of CPNRD’s crane viewing decks.

The public is encouraged to attend. There is no registration fee and lunch will be provided with an RSVP.

Attendance replaces the requirement to take Nitrogen Management Certification Test for the NRD’s Groundwater Quality Management Program. Continuing Education Credits (4 credits) have been applied for the professional Water Well Contractors License and for the first time CPNRD has applied for CEUs for Certified Crop Advisors.

Staff Updates:

- Groundwater Quality and Quantity Programs- Luke Zakrzewski, GIS Image Analyst; Jesse Mintken, Assistant Manager; Dan Clement, Water Resources Specialist
- Nebraska Soil Carbon Project- Courtney Widup, Water Resources Technician
- Whooping Cranes and CPNRD’s Crane Viewing Decks- Brandi Flyr, Hydrologist Ph.D.
- Nitrogen Recommendation Overview- Dean Krull, CPNRD/UNL Demo Projects Coordinator

RSVP for lunch count by February 4<sup>th</sup> (308) 385-6282 or email Marcia Lee at: [lee@cpnrd.org](mailto:lee@cpnrd.org)

Also In This Issue

- Subdistrict Boundary Changes
- Board & Staff Service Awards
- Dean’s Article
- Order Trees by April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Register Wells: Avoid Future Conflicts
- Director of the Year - Ed Kyes
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Annual Crop Reports Due

Producers in Phases II/III of the NRD’s Nitrogen Management Program are reminded to complete their 2021 Crop Report Form by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

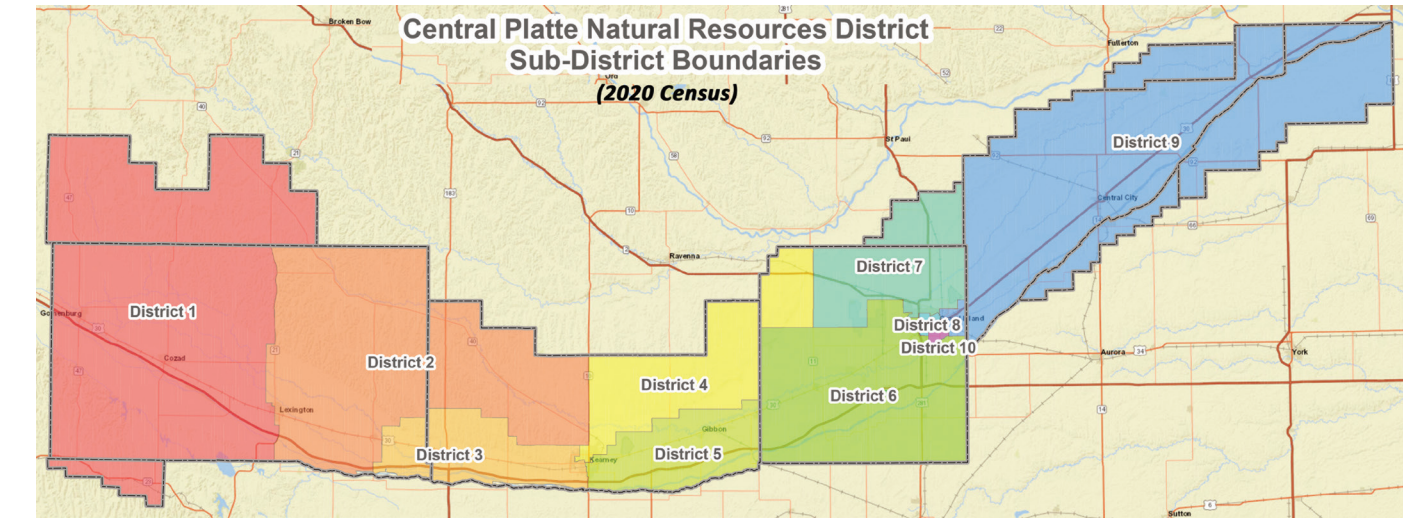
Producers who don’t submit completed forms by the deadline will receive a Cease and Desist letter following the April board of directors meeting. Violations will be enforced prior to the 2022 irrigation season.

SUBMIT FORMS at <http://cpnrd.gisworkshop.com/>



Subdistrict Boundary Changes

Modifications to the NRD’s subdistrict boundaries were made to align with the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data. Each subdistrict is required to be substantially equal in population. With a total population of 144,855 people, each subdistrict now averages 14,486 people and all 21 directors will remain in their current subdistrict. CPNRD’s municipal population increased from 111,125 in 2010 to 119,775 in 2020, with all three urban communities of Grand Island, Kearney and Lexington showing increases. The rural population varied with 13 communities showing a decrease and 12 with slight increases. Nebraska’s total population increased from 1,826,341 to 1,961,504.



Service Recognition Awards

DIRECTOR SERVICE AWARDS - 20 YEARS

**Jerry Wiese, Grand Island** – Jerry has served on the Eastern Projects, Programs, Water Resources/Water Utilization, Variance/Appeals, Budget and Executive committees; and has represented CPNRD as voting delegate at NARD’s Legislative Conference. Jerry served as Board Treasurer (2007-2011) and is currently Vice-Chairman of the Board.



**Ed Kyes, Central City**- Ed has served on the Water Resources, Eastern Projects, Variance/Appeals, Executive, Integrated Management, Budget and Executive committees and served as Programs Chairman. Ed was elected Board Secretary (2005), Vice-Chairman (2009), and Chairman of the Board (2013-2016).

STAFF SERVICE AWARDS

**Lyndon Vogt, General Manager- 25 Years:** Lyndon was recognized for 25 years with Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts. His natural resources career includes Water Resources Coordinator and General Manager at Lower Niobrara NRD (LNNRD) in Butte (1997-2001). He has also been employed as General Manager at Upper Niobrara White NRD in Chadron (2001-2013) and Central Platte NRD in Grand Island (2013-present).

**Kelly Cole, Administrative Assistant– 20 Years:** Kelly is responsible for the NRD’s accounting, insurance, election certifications, tree program, cost-share programs, and travel plans for the board and staff. Kelly also assists with the Nebraska Children’s Groundwater Festival and Wellness Program.

**Angela Warner, GIS Coordinator– 15 Years:** Angela provides technical assistance in creating databases, maps and other GIS projects, certified irrigated acres and waterbank transfers. Angela is the liaison for 11 county assessors, assists with water rights for the irrigation canal partnerships and is a Groundwater Guardian member.

**Luke Zakrzewski, GIS Image Analyst– 10 Years:** Luke maintains the NRD’s irrigated acres databases and the GIS Workshop website. He works with landowners to transfer irrigated acres and determines offsets for the NRD’s Waterbank. Luke also assists with the water quality database and occasional field work including stream gauging and prescribed fires.



Staff with service awards. From left: Kelly Cole (20), Luke Zakrzewski (10), Lyndon Vogt (25), Angela Warner (15)

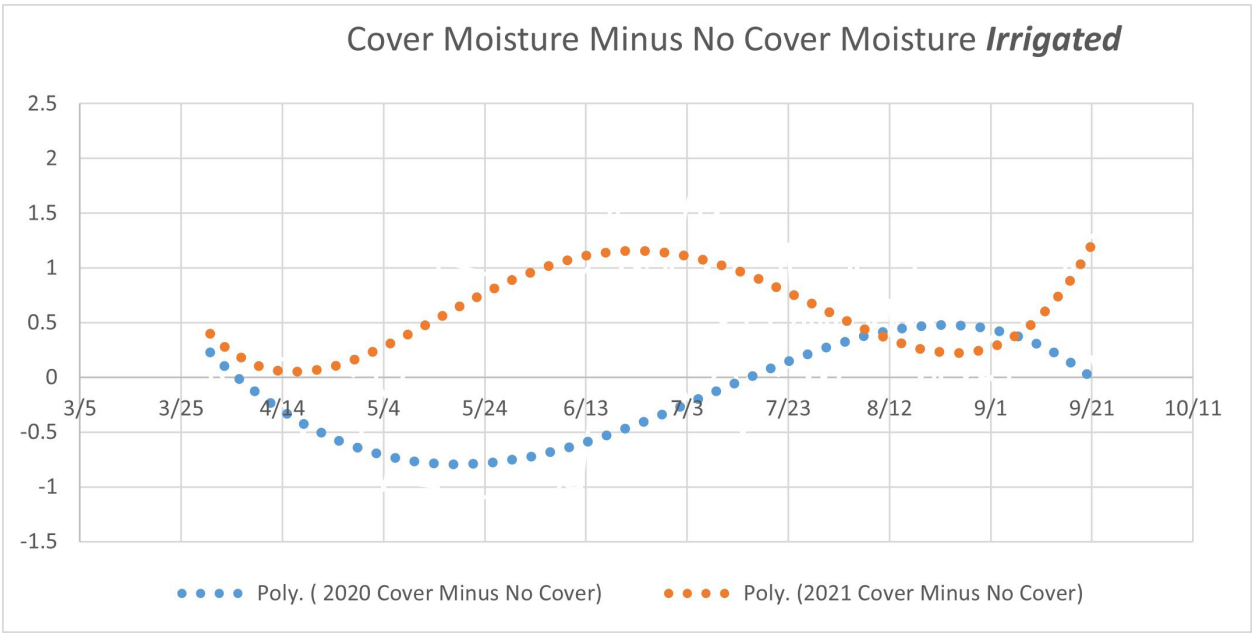
Cover Crop Soil Moisture Monitoring Results

When producers consider incorporating cover crops in their operation, one concern is the amount of water that the cover crop will consume. The past two growing seasons the UNL/CPNRD Demonstration Project focused on this concern. Although both evaluations were set up in Buffalo County, they were established at different locations due to crop rotation. The same protocol was followed both years with corn planted into established rye cover crop. Treatment 1: With and without rye cover crop under pivot Treatment 2: With and without rye cover crop in a dryland corner

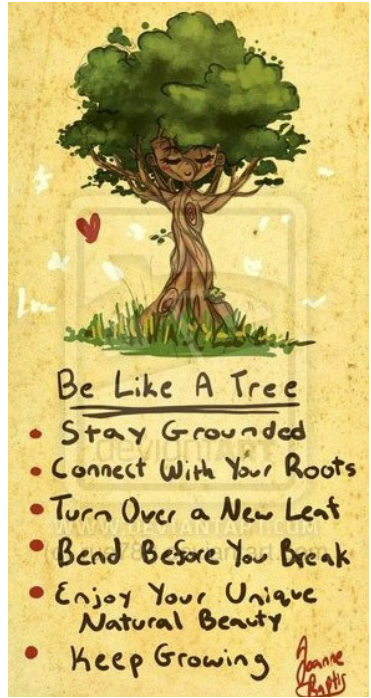


Volumetric water level, the quantity of water contained in the soil, was monitored using a capacitance probe at 4” levels down to the depth of 3 feet. Soil moisture data was collected both years from March 30 to September 22. Recorded daily values were used for the following comparisons.

The following charts show the difference in soil moisture between the cover and no-cover by subtracting the no-cover soil moisture value from the cover crop soil moisture value. Anything above 0 shows that the cover crop test had greater soil moisture than the no-cover test.



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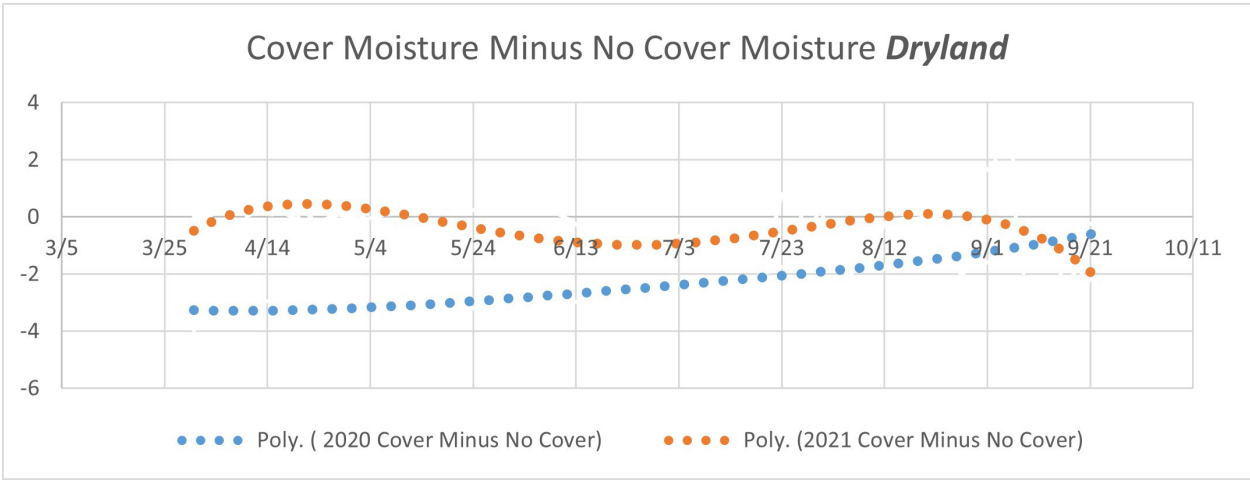
Order Trees & Shrubs by April 1st

It’s time to prepare for next spring. A good investment is to order trees for your property. Good tree cover can increase the value of your property by 9-12%. Updating the trees in your windbreak or planting a new windbreak will lower heating costs and cool your home in the future. Trees also reduce soil erosion and provide food for wildlife.

Conservation trees and shrub seedlings are sold in bundles of 25 for \$22.50.

Order by April 1st! Call (308) 385-6282 or visit the the NRD’s Tree & Weed Barrier webpage at **cpnrd.org**

Cover Crop Results (Continued)



In summary, cover crops do use soil moisture. Looking at the graphs there was a difference from one year to the next. The explanation of why has a few variables.

- Growth of the Rye- 2020 yielded much more biomass growth than 2021.
- Termination of Rye- the cooperator stated termination of the rye in 2020 took considerably longer then in 2021

Irrigated Graph Results

- 2020- Decline in moisture continued for a longer period of time because the rye continued to use moisture.
- 2021- Soil moisture was higher in the cover crop all year.

Dryland Graph Results

- Statistically minimal difference between the cover and the no-cover trial; which shows that the cover crop’s early growth had little effect on total soil water throughout the growing season.
- Late termination of the cover in 2020 affected soil moisture in both the dryland and irrigated trials which shows the importance of a timely termination of a cover crop.

Overall, the two-year study showed that cover crops do have a positive effect on soil water in both irrigated and dryland situations and that timely management of termination is very important.

To learn more about cover crops visit [cpnrd.org/land](http://cpnrd.org/land) management or contact **Dean Krull, Demo Project Coordinator at: dkrull1@unl.edu | (402) 469-0155**

Register Wells to Avoid Future Conflicts

Did you know that Nebraska State Statute not only requires wells to be registered, but also provides landowners 600-foot spacing protection from neighboring landowners? So if your irrigation well is *not* registered, this spacing protection could be violated and also have an effect on the output (efficiency) of your existing well.

Even if you’re not worried about spacing violations, failure to register a water well is a Class IV misdemeanor. As a well owner, you are responsible for ensuring that your well is registered in the correct name and location, and responsible for registering an existing well if it was not previously registered. It is in your best interest to verify the well registration to protect future use. (Exceptions: dewatering wells in less than 90 days, groundwater test wells and domestic/ stock wells drilled prior to 1993.)

The fee to register a well that pumps 50 gallons per minute (gpm) or less is \$70. The fee for wells that pump greater than 50 gpm is \$110. The NRD does not charge to help register irrigation wells. Call **Dan Clement at (308) 385-6282** for assistance.

Verify and/or make changes to well registrations at <https://nednr.nebraska.gov/dynamic/Wells>