

Education Scholarships Available

CPNRD provides financial scholarships for middle school through college-aged youth who live within the District:

MIDDLE SCHOOL - ADVENTURE CAMP ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT (ACE)

ACE camp is hosted by Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts for 6th-8th graders. Camp core sessions include forestry, water, range, soils and wildlife. It’s four days of exploring, learning, and outdoor fun including tubing, zip line, water rockets, and more! **Camp Cost:** \$235 - CPNRD provides \$100 scholarship towards cost. **Dates & Location:** June 26-29 at State 4-H Camp in Halsey, NE **Registration Deadline:** June 10, 2022



HIGH SCHOOL - NEBRASKA YOUTH RANGE CAMP

Nebraska Youth Range Camp is hosted by the Society of Range Management. It consists of a dynamic curriculum for students ages 14-18 years old with a wide array of interests in rangeland management, conservation, ecology, animal science and wildlife. **Camp Cost: \$100** - CPNRD provides \$100 scholarship reimbursements for students who attend the full camp. **Dates & Location:** June 6-9 in Curtis, NE **Registration Deadline:** May 20, 2022

COLLEGE JUNIORS & SENIORS - CPNRD/RON BISHOP MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

College juniors and seniors may apply for a \$1,000 scholarship for the 2022-2023 academic year. CPNRD offers five scholarships for students pursuing a natural resources degree. Eligible career fields include agriculture, plant and soil biology, engineering, resources management, environmental education, geology, earth science, hydrology and other natural resources related careers. **Application Deadline:** April 15, 2022

For additional details on these programs, contact **Marcia Lee at (308) 385-6282 or lee@cpnrd.org** or visit <https://www.cpnrd.org/education>

Building Designs to be Developed for Ed Center/Office

JEO’s architectural proposal to develop an education center and NRD office at the Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Creek Project (PSM) site northwest of Grand Island was approved by the CPNRD board in February. The schematic design will provide directors with a site plan, floor plan and overall building design. Zoning and code requirements will be reviewed along with a site survey and geotechnical soils testing. The design drawings will include dimensioned floor plan(s), building elevations, building cross-sections and an updated opinion of construction cost. The services of engineers who specialize in the design of structural, mechanical and electrical engineering systems will also be enlisted. These design phases will be completed in the 2022 fiscal year budget ending on June 30, 2022.



CPNRD has \$1.7 million available from funds received through the Nebraska Natural Resources Development Fund for the PSM project that were approved by the Commission to be utilized for an education center in October. With those funds and the projected sale of the NRD’s current facility, the CPNRD would be able to consider construction costs to future fiscal year budgets without increasing tax requirements for building purposes.

The education center would include both indoor and outdoor learning experiences that would show how water relates to forests, grasslands and soil. The outdoor sites would provide hands-on learning objectives to see and use topics presented at the indoor learning center including wetlands, walking trails, windbreaks, pollinator habitat, irrigation and crop demonstrations, monitoring wells and many other possibilities. The center would be open to the public and allow for workshops and trainings for ag producers, groundwater technicians, well drillers, and for students to learn how to sample and test wells, use irrigation equipment, acquire CEUs and see new technology and research.

Important Dates

* January 1	Nitrogen Certification test due
* 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- Grand Island
* June 1	Chemigation applications due
*July 14	CPNRD’s 50th Anniversary Open House
* 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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1	Jay Richeson, Gothenburg	Brian Keiser, Gothenburg
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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
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Staff

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GIS Image Analyst: Luke Zakrzewski	Thirty Mile Irrigation District Technician: Mike Ostergard
Hydrologist: Brandi Flyr	UNL/CPNRD Demo Project Coordinator: Dean Krull
Information/Education Specialist: Marcia Lee	Water Quality Specialist: Tricia Dudley
Precision Conservation Specialist: Darren Cudaback	Water Resources Specialist: Dan Clement
Projects Assistant: Tom Backer	Water Resources Technician: Courtney Widup
Range Management Specialist: David Carr	

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IN PERSPECTIVE

Central Platte NRD Newsletter

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

Central Platte NRD Offers Free Sites to View Crane Migration

The Richard Plautz Crane Viewing site in Gibbon is a busy place during the spring crane migration and new upgrades provide better accessibility for the public. Located at the intersection of Elm Island and Lowell roads, the site has two elevated wooden viewing decks, concrete walking trails and a parking lot to provide a safe area to view sandhill and whooping cranes as they migrate through Nebraska. CPNRD received two grants for the upgrades from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission with the NRD contributing a 20% match; and \$50,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for repairs on the streambank near the viewing decks.

The NRD’s other crane viewing site near Alda saw a historic number of the endangered whooping cranes last November. Up to 95 whooping cranes, one of the most endangered bird species in the world, spent several days on the Platte River in central Nebraska. It was the largest group ever documented in the United States outside of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

The Alda Crane Viewing site was also recently awarded RTP funds to pave the recreational trail and three gravel parking lots with concrete to make the area fully ADA accessible. The wooden viewing platform will also be replaced by next spring.

Locations of CPNRD’s Free Crane Viewing Sites:

- Richard Plautz Crane Viewing Site: 1.5 miles south of 1-80 at Exit 285 near Gibbon
- Alda Crane Viewing Site: 2 miles south of 1-80 Exit 305 near Alda
- Three additional roadside turnouts are located south and east of the Alda interchange on Platte River Drive, and west of Rowe Sanctuary on Elm Island Road.

To learn more call (308) 385-6282 or visit <https://www.cpnrd.org/conservation/crane-viewing>



Photo Credit: Brad Mellama

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Festival Volunteers Needed

If you’re as excited about groundwater education as we are, we have a great opportunity for you - volunteer at the Nebraska Children’s Groundwater Festival on Tuesday, May 17th. You’ll help students discover how important groundwater is to Nebraska and to our daily lives. Sign up to be a school guide, presenter assistant, help with registration, set up/clean up, lunch tent or other activities.

To learn more about the Festival, visit www.cpnrd.org/education, call **Marcia or Brody at (308) 385-6282** or email lee@cpnrd.org.



In July, Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) will celebrate the golden 50 year anniversary of protecting lives, property and the future! The Natural Resources District system came to fruition after the devastation of the Dust Bowl. Initially, special purpose districts were developed to solve local soil and water-related problems; however, overlapping authorities, responsibilities and inadequate funding did not allow for best management of the state's natural resources.

In 1969, Senator Maurice Kremer introduced Legislative Bill 1357 to combine Nebraska's 154 special purpose entities into 24 Natural Resources Districts by July 1972. In 1989, the Middle Missouri Tributaries NRD and Papio NRD merged to become the Papio-Missouri River NRD resulting in today's 23 Natural Resources Districts.

Today, Nebraska's unique system of locally controlled, watershed-based conservation is widely admired throughout the nation. In recent years, at least 11 states ranging from Washington to California have inquired about implementing a similar NRD system. Despite being the No. 1 irrigated state in the nation, Nebraska's statewide groundwater levels have been sustained at levels less than a foot below pre-irrigation development in the 1950s, while many states are facing massive groundwater declines with almost depleted aquifers.

While all NRDs share the same 12 main responsibilities, each district sets its own priorities and develops programs to conserve local resources. The Central Platte NRD (CPNRD) works with irrigators and landowners to implement efficient water use and nitrate-conscious practices, constructs flood reduction projects, implements wildlife, tree planting, soil health, prescribed fire and education programs. When necessary, the board enacts regulations to protect our resources.

CPNRD will host a 50th Anniversary Open House in July - watch for details in the next newsletter! To join in statewide 50th anniversary activities throughout 2022, visit nrdnet.org and follow **#Since1972** on social media.

Board and Staff Updates

The Board of Directors has 21 members who are elected to serve four-year terms. The board consists of two directors in each of the NRD's 10 subdistricts and one at-large director. Directors in the same subdistrict are elected in alternate election years. In January, the board elected Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek, for board secretary and re-elected Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island, for board treasurer. Board officers may serve two, two-year terms. Other board officers are Chairman Mick Reynolds, Wood River, and Vice-Chairman Jerry Wiese, Grand Island.

Each directors also signed up for board committees that they plan to serve on in 2022. The public may contact the following committee chairmen with questions regarding projects: Tom Downey-Water Utilization, Ryan Kegley-Western Projects, Chuck Maser-Eastern Projects, Jerry Milner-Water Quality and Deb VanMatre-Programs.

Board meetings are open to the public and held the fourth Thursday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Location: CPNRD Office at 215 Kaufman Avenue in Grand Island. Upcoming meetings: April 28, May 26, June 23, July 28.



Employee Spotlight - Darren Cudaback

Darren Cudaback began his position as Precision Conservation Specialist on February 1st. Cudaback is working with Frito Lay growers for their Gothenburg facility to assist cooperators with conservation practices and nutrient management.

Darren has been working with producers for 23 years as a Farm Marketer based in central Nebraska. He and his wife Kelly enjoy spending time with their three kids and three grandchildren, all of which, live in Lincoln.

Spring Reminders for Producers

Hurry...Annual Crop Report is Due

Producers in Phases II/III of the NRD's Nitrogen Management Program are reminded to complete the 2021 Crop Report Form by March 31st. Producers who don't submit completed forms by the deadline will receive a Cease & Desist letter from NRD staff following the April board of directors meeting. Violations will be enforced prior to the 2022 irrigation season. SUBMIT FORMS at <http://cpnrd.gisworkshop.com/>

Chemigation Training

The goal of the Nebraska Chemigation Act is to protect the groundwater and surface waters from contamination by fertilizers or pesticides. The NRDs manage chemigation permit programs to ensure that proper safety equipment is present and functioning properly. Producers who apply chemicals to their fields are required to attend a training program and pass an exam. A chemigation applicator certification card will be issued to successful applicants by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy. The certification expires on January 1st, four years after it is issued. For example, certifications issued in 2018 expired on January 1, 2022.

Only a few in-person trainings are available in April and May in the state. Online training and testing is available for both initial and recertifying chemigation licensing. Visit: water.unl.edu/article/agricultural-irrigation

Chemigation Permits Due June 1st

Current Chemigation renewal permits expire on June 1st. Renewal permits can be issued without inspection at a cost of \$20. Applications received after the deadline must comply with provisions for new permits, including a \$60 permit fee and a required inspection before the permit can be issued. Once a system has been inspected, it will be reinspected every three years. If changes are made to any part of the system, such as a new pump or a new pivot, reinspection of that system is required.

Your CPNRD contact for Annual Reports & Chemigation: Tricia Dudley (308) 385-6282 | dudley@cpnrd.org

FieldWatch for Specialty Crops

As you make plans for the 2022 growing season, be mindful of the effects of pesticide drift and potential crop damage on specialty crops. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture is encouraging commercial specialty crop growers to sign up for DriftWatch-BeeCheck. This is a free, voluntary tool to increase communication between commercial specialty crop growers and nearby pesticide applicators to reduce incidents of pesticide drift. Growers register their contact information and crop locations on the online map, and farmers and other pesticide applicators check the map to see where specialty crops are located.

Specialty crops include beehives, grapes/other fruits, vegetables, greenhouses/high tunnels, nursery crops, tree/nut orchards, fish farms, non-specialty certified organic and transition to certified organic crops, and an 'other' category, which could include plants grown for seed, cut flowers, flowers for scented products, woody florals, etc.

Because some pesticide labels now require applicators to check DriftWatch and take extra precautions when spraying nearby, more applicators will be using DriftWatch in the coming months. NDA would like to have the most current, complete, and beneficial registry possible by including you! Visit the DriftWatch and BeeCheck registration page and map at: nda.nebraska.gov/pesticide/fieldwatch.html

Get Ahead of Weeds this Spring

The Nebraska Weed Control Association (NWCA) provides proper chemical usage and product quality and control on musk thistle, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, purple loosestrife, saltcedar and phragmites at: <http://www.neweed.org/>



Last Week to Order Tree and Shrub Seedlings

CPNRD's Conservation Tree Program offers native tree and shrub seedlings from Halsey National Forest, as well as weed barrier and tree spades, used for conservation plantings. Conservation seedlings function well as wildlife habitat, windbreaks and streambank plantings. The NRD sells 35 species in bundles of 25 for \$22.50. Weed barrier is sold in several sizes.

Order by April 1st! Call (308) 385-6282 or visit CPNRD's Tree and Weed Barrier webpage at cpnrd.org

Tree Care Tip: Winter drought conditions are worsening across the state. Winter dehydration is most severe on evergreens and broadleaf evergreens. Damage occurs when the amount of moisture lost through foliage is greater than can be replaced by roots from dry soil. Plant tissue dries out resulting in browning of foliage and dieback, which is often not seen until spring. Injury is found on the outer portion of the branches and is most severe on the side of the tree facing the wind or a source of radiated heat, such as a south or west-facing brick wall or street.

Watering mid-winter is recommended if soils are not frozen and air temperatures are above 40° F. It's also important not to be in a hurry to prune damaged tissue. While green needles may be brown, the buds on the branches may still be viable and will eventually open. If damage is not too severe and twigs are not killed, the area may eventually fill in. With evergreens, pruning cannot be done past where there is green leaf tissue. If this is necessary, consider replacing the plant with one better adapted to the site.



CRP Migratory Bird SAFE Sign-Up Cutoff April 1st

The USDA Farm Service Agency has extended the first ranking cutoff period for the CRP Migratory Bird SAFE program. The Migratory Bird SAFE initiative is a voluntary program that provides private landowners a market-based financial incentive for restoring playa wetlands. Landowners can submit offers for what they are willing to accept as an annual payment. Offers must be between the average NASS irrigated rental rates and dryland rates.

This CRP SAFE is available in 42 Nebraska counties including Hall, Buffalo, Dawson, and Custer. The purpose of this CRP SAFE is to restore playas to their proper function, providing benefits that include improved water quality, water recharge for the Ogallala Aquifer, and habitat for migrating waterfowl, cranes, and shorebirds. Migratory Bird SAFE is a CRP continuous enrollment program, but to be considered in the first ranking period, landowners need to submit their offers by April 1. To learn more, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.



Replacing That Old Pivot?

Are you going with a longer pivot and/or adding a booster to your irrigation system? If so, make sure your new pivot doesn't water more acres than what the property is certified to irrigate.

Visit cpnrd.gisworkshop.com or call the CPNRD office to verify at (308) 385-6282.