

Free Birding Event - Saturday, April 27th near Grand Island

Avian enthusiasts are in for a treat as CPNRD invites the community to a family-friendly birding event on Saturday, April 27th from 7:00 a.m. to Noon at the Prairie Silver Moores (PSM) detention cells. This event promises an exciting opportunity to observe a wide variety of bird species while exploring the wetlands and detention cells up close.

Located just six miles northwest of Grand Island, the NRD's 2nd Annual PSM Birding Event offers a unique chance to appreciate Nebraska's diverse landscapes and their significance as bird and wildlife habitats. Whether you're a seasoned birder or a novice enthusiast, grab your binoculars and bring along a friend for a memorable experience.

Our team of wildlife biologists will be onsite to assist attendees with bird identification, ensuring a fulfilling and educational experience for all. Additionally, participants will have the opportunity to win exciting wildlife-themed prizes. Light refreshments and porta-potties will also be available on-site for added convenience.

EVENT DETAILS

Date Saturday, April 27, 2024 **Time** 7:00 a.m. to Noon **Location** Prairie Silver Moores (PSM) Detention Cells

DIRECTIONS

From Grand Island: Head West on Old Potash Rd for 6 miles, turn North on Schauppsville Rd for 1.5 miles to the gate

From Wood River: Head North on Hwy 11 for 4.5 miles, turn East on Husker Hwy for 4 miles. Turn North on Schauppsville Rd for 3 miles, turn East on 13th St, turn North on Schauppsville Rd for 0.5 mile.

From Cairo: Head South on Hwy 11 for 3 miles, turn East on Airport Rd for 4 miles. Turn South on Schauppsville Rd for 1.5 miles.

To the right are some common bird species that you could identify the day of the event. Please note that dogs are not allowed on site during this event.

Join us for a morning of birdwatching and exploration, as we celebrate the rich avian diversity and natural beauty at PSM.

For additional directions or to view a map of the area, call (308) 385-6282 or visit the events page at www.cpnrd.org.

Your CPNRD Contact:

Bill Hiatt | hiatt@cpnrd.org



(From top left to right) Eastern Kingbird, Barn Owl, Great-Horned Owl, Mallard, Greater Prairie Chicken, Blue Heron, Bobwhite Quail, Bald Eagle... and many more.

Prepare for the Growing Season

ANNUAL CROP REPORTS	CHEMIGATION PERMITS
Access the fillable 2024 Crop Report at www.cpnrd.org under "Crop Reports." Previously, gWorks handled software for the crop reports and water quantity tasks, but the contract expired. A new developer is compiling the data. The transition initially planned for completion last fall to minimize disruptions for producers, has been delayed. As a result, a fillable PDF is required for this year's reports.	<p>Annual Renewal \$20.00</p> <p>New Application \$60.00 for each new permit. Inspection required before permit is issued.</p> <p>Special Permit \$60.00 for systems that don't need all safety equipment specified in the regulations, if CPNRD determines by inspection and NDEE concurs.</p> <p>Emergency Permit \$500.00 when chemigation is necessary on short notice.</p>
Your CPNRD Contact: Tricia Dudley dudley@cpnrd.org	<p>CROP REPORTS DUE MARCH 31</p> <p>CHEMIGATION PERMITS DUE JUNE 1</p>

- 1. **Submit Nitrogen Management Report** (by March 31)
- 2. **Place Order for Tree & Shrub Seedlings** (by April 1)
- 3. **Attend Prescribed Fire Landowner Workshop** (on March 23)
- 4. **Submit Chemigation Permits** (by June 1)

Producer To-Dos

- Nitrogen Crop Report:** Reports are due March 31st for **all crops** in Phase II/III Nitrogen Management areas. The NRD is currently transitioning to a different software company, requiring 2024 reports to be submitted by fillable PDF. Producer packets were mailed in early January. *Your Contact: Tricia Dudley*
- Place Tree Orders:** Place tree, shrub and weed barrier orders for spring planting. Over 30 species available. **COST** \$31.25/bundle of 25. Visit cpnrd.org for details. *Your Contact: Kelly Cole*
- RX Fire Workshop:** See details inside on how to register for this informative landowner prescribed fire workshop. *Your Contacts: Dave Carr, Bill Hiatt*
- Chemigation Permits:** Certification is good for 4 years, after which renewals are required. Current permits expire June 1 of each year. *Your Contact: Tricia Dudley*

Questions? Visit cpnrd.org or call (308) 385-6282

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Board of Directors

Subdistrict At-Large Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island (Secretary)

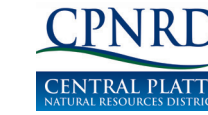
- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Jay Richeson, Gothenburg | Brian Keiser, Gothenburg |
| 2 Dwayne Margritz, Lexington | Tom Downey, Lexington |
| 3 Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek (Treasurer) | Steve Sheen, Kearney |
| 4 Lon Bohn, Gibbon | Ryan Kegley, Kearney |
| 5 Deb VanMatre, Gibbon | Mike Wilkens, Gibbon |
| 6 Jerry Milner, Grand Island | Mick Reynolds, Wood River (Chairman) |
| 7 Jerry Wiese, Grand Island (Vice-Chairman) | Ed Stoltenberg, Cairo |
| 8 Todd Arends, Grand Island | Kevin Werner, Grand Island |
| 9 Ed Kyes, Central City | Doug Reeves, Central City |
| 10 Chuck Maser, Grand Island | Barry Obermiller, Grand Island |

Staff

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 Communications Assistant: Brody Vorderstrasse
 Cozad Ditch Manager: Michael Schmeeckle
 Cozad Ditch Rider: Jake Laird
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 Hydrologist: Brandi Flyr
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 Range Management Specialist: David Carr

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 Office Assistant/NRCS-Central City: Kyla Friedrichsen
 Office Assistant/NRCS-Lexington: Lisa Kennicutt
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 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

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IN PERSPECTIVE

Volume 28 No. 3
March 2024

Central Platte NRD Newsletter

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

Exciting Renovations Underway at Alda Crane Viewing Site

The Alda Crane Viewing site near Alda, Nebraska, has started renovations to enhance accessibility and visitor experience. Renovations will include a new viewing platform, paving the recreational trail and two parking lots to make the area fully ADA accessible. Other improvements will include angler access to the pond and bank stabilization.

The site will be closed for most of the 2024 spring migration, with improvements to be completed in June.

"The timing is unfortunate. Permitting complications did not allow the construction to begin until February and we're up against a June funding deadline," said Jesse Mintken, Assistant Manager, overseeing the project.

CPNRD received two grants for the improvements:

- \$250,000: Nebraska Game & Parks Commission's Recreational Trails Program
CPNRD will provide a 20% funding match.
- \$75,000: Nebraska Environmental Trust, to be used exclusively for stream bank repairs near the viewing deck.

The site was developed in 1993, when CPNRD initiated a task force about safety concerns for local residents, farmers, and crane watchers in the Central Platte valley. The project prioritized redirecting traffic away from county roads and bridges during the crane season by developing free public viewing sites in Alda and Gibbon. The sites were funded by the Nebraska Department of Transportation's Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, CPNRD, Hall County and Buffalo County.

Each spring, more than 80% of the world's population of Sandhill Cranes – around 1,000,000 birds – converge on the Platte River in central Nebraska as they migrate north to their nesting grounds. Millions of migrating ducks and geese arrive with them. This one-of-a-kind experience draws visitors including avid birders, scientists, and casual tourists from across the country and the globe.

Sandhill cranes typically arrive at the end of February in the eastern portion of the Central Nebraska Flyway and linger in the western portion of the Flyway until mid-April.

CPNRD's other free crane viewing sites are located at:

- **Richard Plautz Crane Viewing Site**
1.5 miles south of 1-80 at Exit 285 near Gibbon
- **Roadside Turnouts** South and east of Alda interchange on Platte River Drive & west of Rowe Sanctuary on Elm Island Road

For additional viewing sites from North Platte to Hastings, visit www.nebraskaflyway.com

Alda Crane Viewing Deck Renovations

- New viewing platform
- 2 paved parking lots
- New paved walking trail
- Improved angler access pad near pond

For updates visit:
www.cpnrd.org/conservation/crane-viewing

In This Edition

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- **Pasture & Habitat Improvement \$\$**
- **Rainwater - Use It, Don't Lose It**

Welcome to CPNRD's New Director & Staff

In February, Kevin Werner of Grand Island, was selected to fill the vacancy in Subdistrict 8 on Central Platte NRD's Board of Directors. The term ends December 2024. After serving on the Board for 23 years, Alicia Haussler submitted her resignation in Subdistrict 8 last December, since she has moved and is no longer eligible to serve in that subdistrict.

We'd like to welcome two employees who started their employment with Central Platte NRD in February.

- Lexie Zubia will be stationed in the Grand Island NRCS office.
- Lisa Kennicutt, will be stationed in the Lexington NRCS Field Office



Lexie Zubia Lisa Kennicutt

Primary Election Candidates

Central Platte NRD has 21 members on the Board of Directors who serve four-year terms, with two directors in each of the NRD's 10 sub-districts and one at-large director. Below are the incumbents and non-incumbents who have filed for the Primary Election to be held on May 14, 2024.

SUBDISTRICT	CANDIDATES
Subdistrict 1	Jay Richeson, Gothenburg
Subdistrict 2	Dwayne Margritz, Lexington
Subdistrict 3	Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek
Subdistrict 4	Ryan Kegley, Kearney
Subdistrict 5	Mike Wilkens, Gibbon
Subdistrict 6	Mick Reynolds, Wood River
Subdistrict 7	John Stoltenberg, Cairo
Subdistrict 8	Todd Arends, Grand Island Kevin Werner, Grand Island
Subdistrict 9	Doug Reeves, Archer Andrew Simmons, Marquette
Subdistrict 10	Barry Obermiller, Grand Island

Attention Farmers: Optimize Your Nitrogen Applications with CPNRD's Cost Share Program

With the increasing cost of fertilizer, now is the perfect time to explore ways to maximize your nitrogen efficiency. Central Platte NRD is excited to introduce a new cost-share program that provides financial assistance for trying Sensor-Based Fertigation.



What is Sensor-Based Fertigation? It's a cutting-edge technology that analyzes satellite images to deliver precise fertigation scheduling recommendations for your crops throughout the growing season. By optimizing nitrogen applications, farmers can not only save money on fertilizer but also improve crop yields and minimize environmental impact.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to improve your farming practices and boost your bottom line! To learn more about Central Platte NRD's cost-share program and how you can participate, visit the Cost Share page at cpnrd.org or give us a call at (308) 385-6282.

Take control of your nitrogen applications and join us in building a more sustainable future for agriculture!

Your CPNRD Contacts Kelly Cole | cole@cpnrd.org and Dean Krull | dkrull@unlnotes.unl.edu

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY!

Nitrogen Nexus: Using N-Time to Boost Profit, Efficiency and Productivity

Webinar will consist of an N-Time overview, discussion of 2023 on-farm research case studies, and product updates to prescription generation capabilities in N-Time.

Webinar Dates: March 15, 2024, 11 AM CT | April 11, 2024, 11 AM CT **Register at:** www.sentinel fertigation.com

Driving Conservation Success A Year in Review of the Precision Conservation Management Program

Darren Cudaback, Precision Conservation Specialist, recently delivered his annual report on the progress of the Precision Conservation Management Program (PCM) in Gothenburg. Since 2021, enrollment has skyrocketed from 11 customers covering 18,708 acres to an impressive 81 customers managing 128,370 acres in 2023.



Among the program's success stories are the adoption of key practices such as cover crops, embraced by 25 customers across 12,214 acres, and no till/strip till, implemented by 75 customers spanning 120,772 acres.

Beyond these practices, PCM offers a range of irrigation incentives, including sprinkler packages/renozzling, pivot telemetry and autonomous pivots. With a total investment of \$899,228 and an average of \$11,240 per producer, PCM is making significant strides in sustainable agriculture.

Central to the program's success are the dedicated Precision Conservation Specialists, who provide one-on-one support to farmers. From custom farm reports to navigating federal, state and local programs, these specialists are the cornerstone to farmer success.

At its core, PCM combines precision technology and data management with financial insights to empower farmers in making informed decisions. By integrating conservation practices with financial data, PCM aims to not only reduce environmental impact but also enhance farmers' bottom line.

PCM originated from the Illinois Corn Growers Association, making up the conservation arm of the entity. PCM is funded by the USDA NRCS – Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

Your CPNRD Contact Darren Cudaback | cudaback@cpnrd.org | 308-216-1153

Prescribed Fire Landowner Workshop - Saturday, March 23

Join us for an informative workshop on prescribed fire implementation. This workshop will cover a range of topics including equipment, safety procedures, and real-life experiences from landowners. Presentations include:

Prescribed Fire Overview: Bill Hiatt/Dave Carr, Central Platte NRD

Seasonal Weather Outlook: Mike Moritz, National Weather Service - Hastings

Landowners' Experience Using Prescribed Fire: Mark Alberts, Gothenburg Rancher

Prescribed fire can be a valuable tool in the maintenance and improvement of native grasslands. Invasive species, such as Eastern Red Cedar, can take away natural grassland acres but with proper preparation, prescribed burning can benefit pastures and wildlife habitat. When prescribed fire is used along with appropriate grazing practices, the results are increased economic output and wildlife benefits.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn from experts in the field! A 20-acre training burn in the area will be included as follow up on a different day. Free lunch will be provided.

EVENT DETAILS Saturday, March 23 | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM | Ravenna Volunteer Fire Dept, 224 Alba Avenue
RSVP by March 19th at [308-385-6282](tel:308-385-6282) or visit the **Events page** at www.cpnrd.org

Your CPNRD Contacts: Brody Vorderstrasse | brody@cpnrd.org or Dave Carr | carr@cpnrd.org

The Central Platte NRD has cost-share funds available to farmers and ranchers to help remove unwanted trees or to defer grazing to prepare for a prescribed burn. Cost-share includes \$30/acre for grazing deferment, \$75/acre for cedar tree removal, and 50% for prescribed burning.

Interested producers should call Central Platte NRD at 308-385-6282 to learn more and sign up for these programs.

Education Opportunities

CPNRD-Ron Bishop Memorial Scholarship Program	Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival	Adventure Camp About the Environment (ACE)
ATTENTION COLLEGE STUDENTS \$1,000 scholarships are awarded annually to college juniors, seniors, or graduate students studying natural resources at accredited institutions. Applicants or their parents must reside within Central Platte NRD. Five scholarships are available for the 2024-2025 academic year. Applications must be postmarked by April 15, 2024.	CALLING VOLUNTEERS Join CPNRD as we host nearly 900 Nebraska's youth at CCC/College Park. As a volunteer, you'll help students discover the importance of groundwater in Nebraska. *Assist with set up: Monday, May 13 *Help with event: Tuesday, May 14 Classroom Guides are being recruited to take students to activities. We also need activity assistants, registration helpers, lunch tent helpers.	MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMP Join us for a 4-day summer adventure for 6 th & 7 th graders! From June 23-26, explore, learn & have fun at Camp Kaleo in Burwell, NE. Experience hands-on activities, career exploration in natural resources, ziplining, tanking, tubing, campfires, and more! CPNRD offers \$130 scholarships towards the \$235 registration fee. <i>Camp sponsored by Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts.</i>

For more information or to sign up, call 308-385-6282 or visit our Education Page at www.cpnrd.org.

Your CPNRD Contacts: Marcia Lee | lee@cpnrd.org or Brody Vorderstrasse | brody@cpnrd.org

Rainwater - Use It, Don't Lose It!

Ever wonder how to best utilize rainwater? Join Kelly Feehan, Nebraska Extension Educator, as she explains Nebraska Extension's Water Dog Program.

Webinar: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 | 6:30-8:00 CDT Register at <https://hles.unl.edu/waterdogs>

Rain is a valuable resource we often see go down the storm drain or run off properties. We can conserve drinking water, by not using it for landscape irrigation, when we make the most of rainwater we receive. Rainwater harvesting methods and landscape practices that help slow and soak in rainwater, such as downspout redirection, rain barrels, rain gardens, soil management, pervious surfaces, well-placed berms and more will be covered.

Questions? Contact Kelly Feehan | 402-563-4901 or Elizabeth Exstrom | 308-385-5088