

Attention Producers: Free Flow Meters!



Central Platte NRD has received a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART grant to install 100 mechanical flow meters and telemetry across the District.

The program will provide historical and real-time information regarding groundwater pumping rates and volumes through an online login specific to each producer. These flow meters are NOT regulatory and will only be used for CPNRD’s groundwater management database.

Research has shown that using a mechanical flow meter has saved producers approximately \$7,500 over 10 years. Once a flow meter is provided to a producer, it is yours to keep simply by sharing your data with us for 10 years.

Don’t miss this opportunity - only 100 systems are available District-wide!

Program Benefits

- Completely FREE
- Equipment, installation & data access included.
- Information is used only for CPNRD’s database.
- Save up to \$7,500 over 10 years!
- Yours to keep after 10-year data-sharing period

Your CPNRD Contact: Brandi Flyr (308) 395-7294 | flyr@cpnrd.org

Transfer Irrigated Acres until March 1<sup>st</sup>

Irrigated acres not certified with Central Platte NRD must be offset with new acres. Failure to obtain an approved transfer from CPNRD is subject to penalties. Purchasing new land? Check the certified irrigated acres!

CPNRD Contacts: Luke Zakrzewski luke@cpnrd.org (308) 395-7672 Angela Warner warner@cpnrd.org (308) 395-7595

Follow Central Platte NRD



2025 - 2026

- Nov. 27 - 28 Office closed. Thanksgiving holiday observed
- Dec. 25 - Jan. 1 Office closed. Christmas/New Year holidays observed
- 2026
- January 1 Nitrogen certification test due
- February 10 CPNRD’s Water Programs Update - CCC, Lexington
- March 31 Crop reports, water, and soil samples due
- June 1 Chemigation renewal permits due
- July 4 Office closed. Independence Day observed.
- June 15 CPNRD-Ron Bishop Memorial College Scholarship applications due
- July 23 Budget Hearing & Board Meeting
- Sept 1 - March 1 Irrigation transfer apps accepted
- September 15 Chemigation reinspection deadline
- Nov. 1 - April 1 Order trees and shrubs
- Nov. 26 - 27 Office closed. Thanksgiving holiday observed.
- Dec. 25 - Jan. 1 Office closed. Christmas/New Year holidays observed



Nebraska Extends Incentive Program to Cut Fertilizer Use

The deadline to sign up for Nebraska’s Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act (NiRIA) program has been extended to December 15, 2025. NiRIA provides financial incentives to farmers who reduce nitrogen fertilizer use. The Department of Water, Energy and Environment (DWEE) updated the NiRIA guidance for the 2026 cropping season.

Launched in 2025, NiRIA was created under LB 1368 (2024) to encourage farmers to cut commercial fertilizer application by either 40 pounds per acre or 15% of their baseline rate, whichever is less. The program is designed to reduce nitrogen application rates while helping producers manage input costs and maintain yield productivity.

The 2026 program is supported by funding from the Nebraska Corn Board. Farmers growing corn, sugar beets, wheat, and potatoes are eligible to apply through Central Platte NRD.

Three Levels of Incentives

NiRIA divides Nebraska into three priority areas based on water quality risks and irrigation practices:

Priority A: Wellhead protection areas and higher-phase management zones where nitrate levels are elevated. Producers can earn \$15 per acre.

Priority B: Irrigated acres outside of Priority A areas. Producers can earn \$12 per acre if they provide 3 years of crop data or complete soil sampling.

Priority C: All other areas, including dryland acres. Incentives are set at \$10 per acre.

In all cases, farmers must demonstrate actual reductions in nitrogen fertilizer use through crop reports, soil tests, or NRD approved methods. Substituting manure, wastewater, or other nitrogen sources in place of commercial fertilizer is not allowed.

Program Requirements

To receive payments, producers must document their nitrogen reductions by December 15<sup>th</sup> of the year following enrollment. Each application is limited to 160 acres per field, and only producers in good standing with CPNRD rules are eligible. Farmers who participated in the 2025 program may reapply in 2026 in different fields only.

Farmers interested in applying should visit the DWEE’s website for details: https://dnr.nebraska.gov and search for Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Program.

Your CPNRD Contact: Courtney Widup (308) 395-7605 | widup@cpnrd.org

Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act

Application Deadline Extended Dec. 15, 2025

Your CPNRD Contact: Courtney Widup (308) 395-7605 | widup@cpnrd.org



Nitrogen Certification Test

If your nitrogen certification is nearing expiration, CPNRD will send you a notification and test to complete and return. Certification is good for four years, and we honor certifications from other NRDs.

Prefer not to take the test? Attending CPNRD’s Water Programs Update on February 10<sup>th</sup> in Lexington counts as your nitrogen certification—join us to get certified and learn the latest on our water programs.

Your CPNRD Contact: Tricia Dudley (308) 395-7213 | dudley@cpnrd.org



IN PERSPECTIVE

Volume 30 No. 4 November 2025

Central Platte NRD Newsletter

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

Order Conservation Trees through December 31<sup>st</sup> to Save 10%

Spring planting is just around the corner! The Central Platte NRD is now taking orders for conservation tree seedlings, perfect for windbreaks, wildlife habitat, erosion control, and beautifying your property. Order by December 31<sup>st</sup> and receive a 10% discount on trees, weed barrier, and planting services. Depending on weather, the seedlings will be available to pick up from CPNRD or your local NRCS office in mid-April.

CPNRD offers 34 species of conservation seedlings sold in bundles of 25 for \$31.25, with 50% cost-share available for orders of 200+ trees.

Orders can be placed with CPNRD or your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office. NRCS staff are available to assist with species selection, windbreak design, and planting options to help landowners establish healthy, long-lasting tree plantings.

Quantities are limited, so don’t wait! An order form is included in this newsletter. Note: CPNRD’s office will be closed December 25 - January 1; however, all orders received during that time by mail, drop box or email, will be honored and eligible for the 10% discount.

To learn more about CPNRD’s Conservation Tree Program visit cpnrd.org/tree program.

Your CPNRD Contact: Kelly Cole (308) 395-7134 | cole@cpnrd.org

NRCS offices (Ext. 3):				
Central City	Kearney	Grand Island	Lexington	Osceola
308-946-3035	308-237-3118	308-395-8586	308-324-6314	402-747-2111



Tom Backer, Central Platte NRD Projects Assistant, stands between two Austrian pine windbreaks that he planted in 1985 and 1986. In his 41-year career with the CPNRD, Tom has planted over 800 windbreaks.

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- Nebraska Extends NiRIA until 12/15/25
- Insert: Tree Order Form & Weed Barrier



CENTRAL PLATTE NRD  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Member	Subdistrict
Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island	At-Large
Jay Richeson, Gothenburg	1
Brian Kelsier, Gothenburg	1
Dwayne Margritz, Lexington	2
Tom Downey, Lexington	2
Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek	3
Luke Ourada, Elm Creek	3
Lon Bohn, Gibbon	4
Ryan Kegley, Kearney	4
Deb VanMatre, Gibbon	5
Mike Wilkens, Gibbon	5
Jerry Milner, Grand Island	6
Mick Reynolds, Wood River	6
John Stoltenberg, Cairo	7
Ed Stoltenberg, Cairo	7
Todd Arends, Grand Island	8
Kevin Werner, Grand Island	8
Amy Kyes, Central City	9
Doug Reeves, Archer	9
Chuck Maser, Grand Island	10
Barry Obermiller, Grand Island	10
Board Officers	
Chairman	Deb VanMatre
Vice Chairman	Tom Downey
Secretary	Keith Ostermeier
Treasurer	Marvion Reichert
Staff Member	Position
Lyndon Vogt	General Manager
Jesse Mintken	Assistant Manager
Tom Backer	Projects Assistant
David Carr	Range Management
Zachary Charity	Easement Specialist
Kelly Cole	Administrative Assistant
Darren Cudaback	Precision Conservation
Tricia Dudley	Water Quality Specialist
Brandi Flyr	Hydrologist
Korey Gerken	Cozad Ditch Rider
Jim Harris	TMID Manager
Bill Hiatt	Resources Conservationist
Devin Hingst	Resources Conservationist
Dean Krull	UNL/CPNRD Project Coord.
Marcia Lee	Information/Education
Shane Max	Resources Conservationist
Courtney Olson	Office Assistant
Marci Ostergard	TMID Office Assistant
Mike Ostergard	TMID Technician
Collin Quandt	Agronomist
Michael Schmeackle	Cozad Ditch Manager
Brody Vorderstrasse	Communications Assistant
Angela Warner	GIS Coordinator
Courtney Widup	Water Resources Technician
Vacant	Prescribed Fire Specialist
Luke Zakrzewski	GIS Image Analyst

NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant	County
Lexie Zubia	Hall
Kyla Friedrichsen	Merrick
Lisa Kennicutt	Dawson
Shelly Lippincott	Buffalo

Want to receive the latest  
In Perspective Newsletter by email? Send  
your address to Marcia at lee@cpnrd.org

Board of Director Updates

Luke Ourada of Elm Creek was appointed to the Board of Directors in September to fill the vacancy in Subdistrict 3. Ourada succeeds Steve Sheen who stepped down in June after serving on the Board for 18 years. Ourada will serve through December 2026.



Mark your calendar for Tuesday, February 10, 2026! Central Platte NRD will host our annual Water Programs Update at Central Community College in Lexington. Details and registration information will be provided in the next newsletter.



CPNRD Job Opening

Prescribed Fire Planning Specialist

Applications are being accepted for a full-time Prescribed Fire Planning Specialist. Computer skills, prescribed burn planning and implementation experience required. Salary \$50,000 - \$60,000 per year, commensurate with experience. This is a grant funded position, with Initial grant funding secured for 3 years. Benefits include vacation and sick leave, health insurance & retirement. Applicant must meet the following requirements:

- At least 18 years of age with a valid driver’s license
- Experience writing prescribed burn plans and be able to secure USDA NRCS – Nebraska Job Approval Authority for prescribed fire planning
- Completed training (NRCS or National Wildfire Coordinating Group - NWCG) for prescribed burn planning
- Completed NWCG S130/S190 Basic Wildland Fire Training
- Proficient with Microsoft and GIS software utilized in prescribed fire planning
- College degree in natural sciences related field: biology, range, fire ecology, or fire science Associate’s degree related to wildland/prescribed fire AND two years experience with prescribed fire.
- Must be able to pass a DOT physical examination and the NWCG Work Capacity Test for prescribed fire.

To apply send resume and cover letter to:  
Lyndon Vogt: vogt@cpnrd.org or  
Andy Bishop: andy\_bishop@fws.gov  
Mail to: CPNRD, 215 Kaufman Ave. Grand Island NE 68803

Nitrate Contamination in Nebraska  
Drinking Water Series - Part 2

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Nebraska’s economy, with nearly 44 million acres (approximately 89.4% of the state) dedicated to farming and ranching. Of these millions of acres, more than 8.4 million acres of land are irrigated with groundwater. Extensive use of irrigation and nitrogen fertilizers are a known risk for nitrate contamination in these groundwater sources, posing potential health risks to the more than 20% of the state’s population who are dependent on private wells for their drinking water supply.

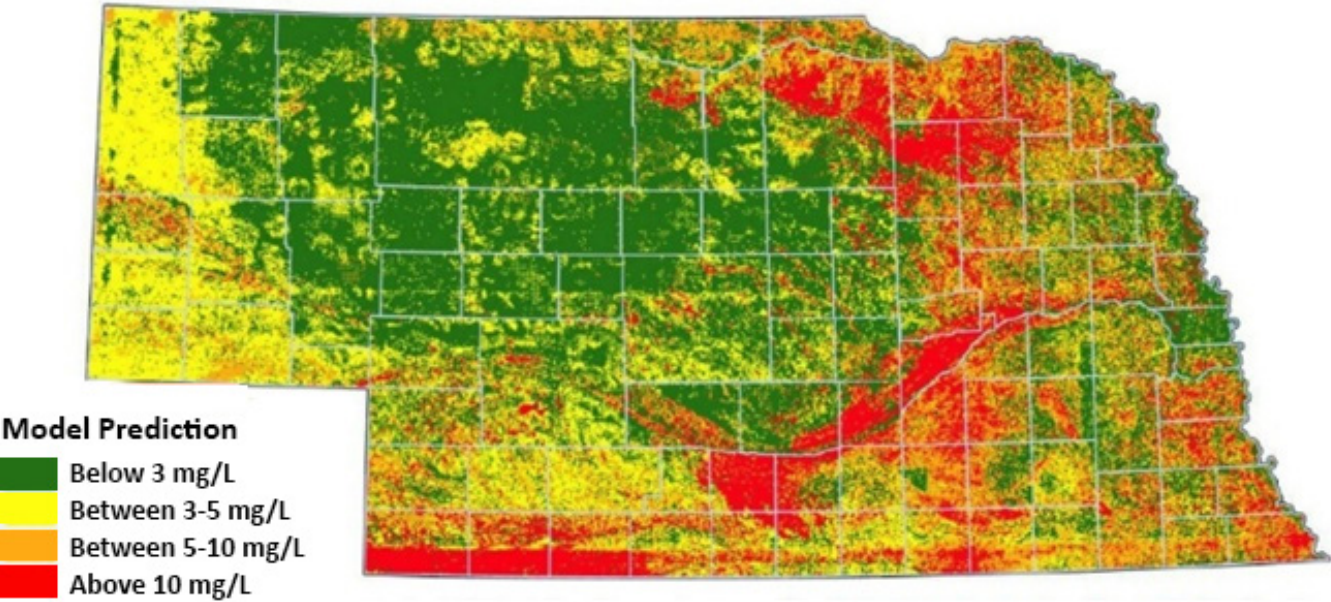
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set a maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 mg/L for nitrate in drinking water; however, evidence suggests that adverse health outcomes have been linked to much lower levels, as low as 2.1 mg/L. Although public drinking water systems are regulated and tested for contaminants regularly, private well owners must test and treat their own well water to ensure safety. In rural areas of Nebraska, where agriculture is most concentrated, a higher proportion of residents rely on private wells, which are at a higher risk of nitrate contamination due to their proximity to crop production and concentrated feeding operations.

Nitrate contamination in drinking water has been associated with many negative health outcomes. Pregnant women and infants are particularly susceptible, as an increased risk of preterm birth, along with neural tube defects. Nitrate exposure has also been linked to pediatric cancers, with some populations in Nebraska reporting higher incidence rates of pediatric brain and central nervous system (CNS) cancers, as well as leukemia and lymphoma. Nitrate exposure from contaminated water has also been linked to adult cancers, including gastric and colorectal cancer.

Like most water quality contaminants, nitrates are tasteless, odorless, and colorless. The only way to know if you have elevated levels of nitrate in your drinking water is to have it tested at a certified laboratory for drinking water analysis once a year. Bottles to collect your sample are available at the Central Platte NRD office.

If you have a private domestic well, you can order a testing kit from the Nebraska Public Health Environmental Laboratory [www.nebraska.gov/dhhs/water-test-kits/private.html](http://www.nebraska.gov/dhhs/water-test-kits/private.html). For more information about water quality and your health in Nebraska, visit UNL’s Extension webpage [water.unl.edu/category/water-and-health](http://water.unl.edu/category/water-and-health)

Predictive Nitrate Model Results: Composite Layer in  
Terms of Nitrate Concentration



*\*This article is part of a four-part series on nitrate contamination in drinking water in Nebraska and the impact on human health. Future articles will discuss community activities that have been completed as part of a collaboration between the University of Nebraska Medical Center; the Water, Climate, and Health Program; and the University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension Office.*

Students Spotlight

Congratulations, Overton FFA Team!

The Overton FFA Team, consisting of Parker Walahoski, Paige Walahoski, Toby Orvis and Mason Dutro, earned first place in the Environment and Natural Resources Contest at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. The team was led by advisor Juliana Loudon.

To prepare for the contest and strengthen their public speaking skills, the team presented to CPNRD’s Board of Directors during their October meeting. The NRD also assisted with the team’s registration fee to attend the national contest.



Eagle Scout Project Enhances Groundwater  
Monitoring Education at Outdoor Learning Area

A big shout-out to Riley Bishop, Doniphan-Trumbull High School, who recently completed his Eagle Scout project at the Grand Island Groundwater Guardian Team/CPNRD Outdoor Learning Area located at the Nebraska State Fairgrounds. As part of his project, Bishop visited with fair goers to discuss groundwater monitoring and the Boy Scout Program.

Bishop worked with Central Platte NRD staff to research, write, and design a new Groundwater Monitoring sign, displayed near the site’s monitoring well.

Bishop reflected on the project saying, “It means a lot to me to be able to inform the public on natural resources and help people learn more about the aquifer and how it is managed. Hopefully my project will help with keeping the public up to date on the aquifer.”



Staff Spotlight: Courtney Olson

Courtney Olson has served as the Office Assistant at Central Platte NRD since July 2024. In her role, Courtney assists with key administrative tasks including preparing bank deposits, assembling board meeting materials, and processing quarterly travel and expense reports. She also helps staff with various projects, documents staff leave, coordinates NRD apparel orders, and manages office supply inventory.

Courtney said she has enjoyed the change of pace her new role has brought her. She said she also enjoys the time with producers on the phone or in person.

This year, Courtney also took on management of the Chemigation Program. You may have already received a text or email from her regarding your upcoming chemigation permit renewal. Renewal packets for all permits expiring in 2026 are ready to send. Traditionally, these notices were mailed after January 1<sup>st</sup>, however, permit holders who would like their 2026 renewal emailed or mailed before January 1<sup>st</sup> may contact her to check that task off your spring to-do list.

Your CPNRD Contact: Courtney Olson (308) 385-6282 | olson@cpnrd.org

