

Habitat Happenings

Playa Wetlands – Habitat & Groundwater Recharge

The name Playa (“ply-ah”) originates from the Spanish word for beach. In Nebraska, playas are shallow depressions that cycle through wet and dry periods. In the past, these were referred to by producers as buffalo wallows, mud puddles or wasteland.

The Rainwater Basin Wetland Complex is a unique cluster of these wetlands. Here in Nebraska, this landscape is located north of the Republican River and South of the Platte River extending west from Seward to Gosper counties. Historically over 11,000 wetlands covered over 200,000 acres in this region. Each of these wetlands had a unique watershed that funnels water to the wetland. The fertile soils and abundant groundwater resources makes this landscape one of the most agriculturally productive regions in Nebraska.



To maximize ag production many wetlands were drained, and now as a result, only 10% of the wetlands function. This is problematic since 8.6 million waterfowl rely on these wetlands each year. When large congregations of waterfowl are forced into limited habitat, birds become stressed resulting in die-offs from avian cholera. Stressed birds cannot forage effectively which impacts populations since waterfowl put on 20% of their body mass during spring migration in preparation for nesting. Healthy birds initiate nesting earlier, lay larger clutches, and are more apt to re-nest if an initial nest is lost. All of these traits contribute to population sustainability.

In addition to providing important habitat, these wetlands are significant groundwater recharge points to the underlying aquifer. Groundwater monitoring suggests that one acre of playa ponding water for 35 days can recharge 1.14 million gallons of water. This is sufficient water for 100 residents based on the average municipal water use of Lincoln or sufficient groundwater for a six-inch irrigation allocation on 3.5 acres of farmland.

The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture is a public/private partnership that works with federal and state agencies, Natural Resources Districts, non-government organizations and private landowners to develop “win-win” opportunities to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands in the Rainwater Basin.

For more information on playa wetlands visit www.rwbjv.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

**You want to improve your soil’s health.
We want to help you do it.**

New funds are available for cover crop, no-till and diverse crop rotation through the Nebraska Soil Carbon Project. Up to \$45/acre!

Visit: cpnrd.org/land-management/soil-health

**Contact Courtney Widup, Water Resources Technician
(308) 385-6282 or widup@cpnrd.org**

Important Dates

* January 1	Nitrogen Certification test due
* February 8	Water Programs Conference- Grand Island
* March 31	Crop Report forms 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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Subdistrict	Member	Member
At-Large	Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island (Treasurer)	Brian Keiser, Gothenburg
1	Jay Richeson, Gothenburg	Tom Downey, Lexington
2	Dwayne Margritz, Lexington	Steve Sheen, Kearney
3	Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek	Ryan Kegley, Kearney
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Staff

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Assistant Manager: Jesse Mintken	Resources Conservationist: Bill Hiatt
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Cozad Ditch Manager: Michael Schmeekle	Secretary/NRCS-Grand Island: Vacant
Cozad Ditch Rider: Jake Laird	Secretary/NRCS-Central City: Vacant
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GIS Image Analyst: Luke Zakrzewski	Thirty Mile Irrigation District Manager: Jim Harris
Hydrologist: Brandi Flyr	Thirty Mile Irrigation District Technician: Mike Ostergard
Information/Education Specialist: Marcia Lee	UNL/CPNRD Demo Project Coordinator: Dean Krull
Precision Conservation Specialist: Morgan Wrich	Water Quality Specialist: Tricia Dudley
Projects Assistant: Tom Backer	Water Resources Specialist: Dan Clement
	Water Resources Technician: Courtney Widup

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IN PERSPECTIVE

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Central Platte NRD Newsletter



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

Fall Fertilization - No Longer Recommended

Winterizer Fertilization Recommendation by Sarah Browning, Nebraska Extension Educator

Fall is a great time of year! Summer’s heat and humidity are behind us making work outdoors pleasurable again. It’s also a time when many consider making a final fertilizer application to their turf (lawn), but...Spoiler alert!... that may not be needed anymore.

For many years specialists recommended a late fall “winterizer” fertilizer application, which was applied in late November. But new research has ended that recommendation. However, if your turf has thin areas, it’s a great time to prepare for dormant seeding. Fall weather is characterized by lower light intensity, shorter day length and cooler temperatures; these environmental changes in turn reduce the amount of water used by grass plants, which decreases the “sucking” force of leaf-blade water loss to move Nitrogen (N) fertilizer from grass roots and into the plants. This slowing of plant processes reduces fertilizer uptake efficiency and increases the risk of N loss to the environment during the winter.

In the best-case scenario, Nitrogen applied in late fall stays in the soil and causes a tremendous growth flush next spring. In the worst-case scenario, N either leaches downward through the soil or through surface runoff into surface water (creeks, lakes and ponds) where it causes algae blooms next spring. Leaching can occur any time of year but the potential is highest with late fall fertilizer applications.

Slow-release fertilizers, many of which require soil microbes to breakdown their outer pellet coating and make the inner nutrients available for plant uptake, also lose effectiveness in late fall as the soils cool and microbial activity slows.

For these reasons, the recommendation for a late fall application of slow-release fertilizer has ended. If your grass is dark green, healthy and thick no additional fertilizer is needed in late fall. Save the fall fertilizer product for application next spring – it’s better for the environment, your turf and your wallet. As long as the bags are kept dry, they will be fine for use in spring.

Also In This Issue

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If the turf is newly established - possibly following new home construction, off-color or low-vigor, a late fall application may still be beneficial. Make a light application of water-soluble product, 0.5 lb N or less before the end of October.

For additional information contact: Sarah Browning, Extension Educator at (402) 441-7180 or visit Turf iNfo at turf.unl.edu/turfinfo/11_22_NoLateFallNRequired.pdf

“...the recommendation for a late fall application of slow-release fertilizer has ended. If your grass is dark green, healthy and thick, no additional fertilizer is needed.”

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Central Platte NRD is updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan, last approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2017. Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs) are required to be updated on a five-year cycle as part of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 administered by FEMA. The current HMP will expire in 2022.

Once a community, county, or district is part of an approved plan, they become eligible for up to 75% cost-share for a wide variety of projects listed in the plan. This HMP update is funded by a FEMA planning grant. The cost is shared 75% through federal funding and 25% through a local match. The NRD is providing the 25% local match for the update.

A hazard mitigation plan is a publicly guided document that identifies vulnerability to natural disasters such as flood, drought, earthquake, wildfire, winter storm, tornado, severe thunderstorm, dam failure, etc. The plan sets goals, establishes mitigation alternatives and prioritizes projects which may alleviate potential damages to property and provide protection when future disasters occur.

Public input will be gathered throughout the duration of the plan development through online tools and public meetings. All communities, counties, school districts, fire districts and other taxing authorities within the NRD are eligible to participate. The first round of public meetings was held this fall with the second round of meetings to occur in January 2022.

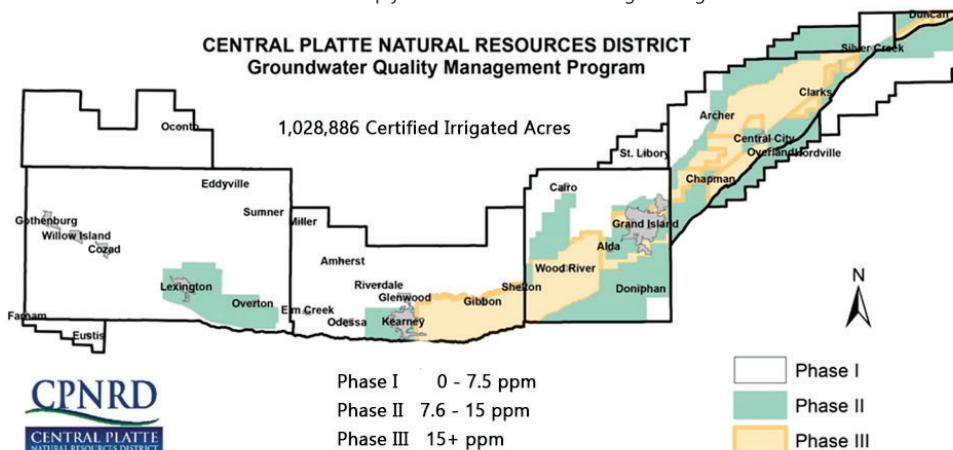
Additional information can be found at: <https://jeo.com/central-platte-nrd-hazard-mitigation-plan-update>.
Your Contact: Becky Appleford, JEO Project Manager, at (402) 392-9915 or email: rappleford@jeo.com



Becky Appleford, JEO Project Manager, presenting at CPNRD's public meeting held this fall.

Nitrate Certification Test Due January 1

Is your Nitrogen Management Certification up for renewal this year? If so, and you are in Phase II or Phase III areas of the Groundwater Quality Management Plan, you should've received the Nitrogen Management Certification test that CPNRD mailed last week. Certification is required for all producers who apply nitrogen fertilizer in those areas and failure to comply will result in the loss of irrigation rights.



Other Ways to Receive Certification

- If you also farm within another Natural Resources District (NRD), Central Platte will accept the other NRD's Nitrogen Management Certification.
- Attend CPNRD's Water Programs Conference on Tuesday, February 8, 2022. The conference will be held at the Crane Trust Nature & Visitors Bureau near Alda. Watch for additional details in the January newsletter and on CPNRD's website and social media pages. RSVP with Marcia for the lunch count (308) 385-6282 or email: lee@cpnrd.org

Staff Spotlight: Lyndon Vogt

Lyndon Vogt, Central Platte NRD General Manager, has been employed with Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts for 25 years.

Vogt started his NRD career as Water Resources Coordinator at Lower Niobrara NRD in Butte. There he was responsible for chemigation and the water quality database and management program until he was promoted as General Manager in 1997. In 2001, he moved to Chadron when hired as General Manager of the Upper Niobrara White NRD.

The Central Platte NRD Board selected Vogt as General Manager in 2013 to replace Ron Bishop, who retired after 41 years with the CPNRD. Vogt has been fundamental in groundwater management and integrated management decision making. He said his biggest challenge has been staying abreast of all the demands of the district and area resources, which include integrated management planning, water quality and quantity programs, flood control and educational efforts.

Vogt's goal as general manager at Central Platte NRD is to address all resource concerns of the district in the least intrusive and most economically way possible. Over the last 50 years the CPNRD board of directors has always tried to address natural resources issues with the least amount of regulations on constituents as possible, while still addressing all resource concerns the CPNRD is responsible for.

Vogt said, "This can be very challenging, but when the outcome is in everyone's best interest it is very rewarding to be a part of."

Contact Lyndon: (308) 385-6282 vogt@cpnrd.org



Lyndon Vogt
General Manager

Transfer applications for irrigated acres in the Central Platte NRD accepted September 1st - March 1st. Call (308) 385-6282 to set an appointment with our staff.

Tree and Shrub Seedlings Orders Begin

CONSERVATION TREES For Sale

Orders are taken now until April 1, 2022

To Order: Complete the order form on the back and return with payment. Or Visit your local NRCS office or the CPNRD office.

Trees: \$0.90/each + tax (Sold in bundles of 25)
Weed Barrier: \$0.50/foot + tax (minimum of 50 ft)
Small Acreage Pkgs: \$55.00 + tax
Pkgs come preset with 50 total trees, 5 species (10 each)

All Orders Placed before December 31, 2021 will receive a 10% discount.

For a complete description of the trees we sell, visit our website or contact Kelly Cole for a complete tree booklet: (308) 385-6282 or cole@cpnrd.org

www.cpnrd.org **308-385-6282**



Local Property Taxes at Work

Central Platte NRD's total operating budget for the 2022 fiscal year is \$24.5 million with the required property tax of \$3.9 million; a decrease of \$73,396.65 compared to the 2021 budget. Total valuations received from the District's 11 county assessors increased 1.667% to \$17,947,588,662.

With the levy set at 0.022196, a homeowner with property assessed at \$100,000 will pay \$22.20 for conservation benefits provided by the Central Platte NRD including flood reduction, water quality management, water use management, soil health, range management, wildlife habitat improvement, cost-share assistance for producers, recreation and education.

The major expenditures in the budget will assist with future Integrated Management Plan compliance, and Watershed Flood Prevention & Operations grants to complete flood reduction assessments for Spring/Bufalo Creek, Lower Wood River, and Elm/Turkey Creek watersheds.

SEEDLINGS AVAILABLE

- CONIFERS**
- Austrian Pine
 - Colorado Blue Spruce
 - Eastern Red Cedar
 - Jack Pine
 - Ponderosa Pine
 - Rocky Mountain Juniper
 - Norway Spruce
 - Southwest White Pine

- HARDWOODS**
- Black Cherry
 - Black Walnut
 - Bur Oak
 - Catalpa
 - Cottonwood
 - Hackberry
 - Manchurian Apricot
 - Midwest Crabapple
 - Red Oak
 - Red Maple
 - Silver Maple
 - Swamp White Oak

- SHRUBS**
- American Plum
 - American Hazel
 - Amur Maple
 - Black Chokeberry
 - Caragana
 - Chokecherry
 - Common Lilac
 - Elderberry
 - False Indigo
 - Golden Currant
 - Peking Cotoneaster
 - Red-Osier Dogwood
 - Sandcherry
 - Serviceberry
 - Silver Buffaloberry
 - Skunkbush Sumac