

2021 Property Tax Asking Down \$147,000

In August, the Central Platte NRD's board of directors set the levy for the 2021 fiscal-year budget at 0.022982. With this levy, a homeowner with a home assessed at \$100,000 will pay \$22.98 for conservation benefits provided by the Central Platte NRD including flood reduction, nitrate management, water use management, soil health, cost-share to producers, recreation and education.

The total requirements for the general and sinking fund are \$24.7 million with the required property tax of \$4,059,000; a decrease of \$147,325 compared to the 2020 budget. Total valuations received from the District's 11 county assessors decreased 0.0734% to \$17,653,315,322.

The major expenditures in the 2021 budget are \$4 million to meet future Integrated Management Plan compliance and \$2.1 million in Watershed Flood Prevention and Operations grants to complete assessments for Spring/Bufalo Creek, Lower Wood River, and Elm/Turkey Creek watersheds.

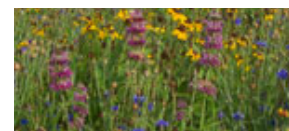
Free Native Prairie Seed: November 2 - 6

Tall grass prairies and wildflowers are very important for Nebraska's wildlife, and planting them is a fun way for people of all ages to learn about native prairies while also increasing native wildlife. Central Platte NRD aims to help people do just that with this year's Native Prairie seed handout. From November 2nd - 6th, you may pick up a free bag of native prairie seed at the NRD office.

There are two types of seed to choose from: Tall Grass Prairie mix or Wildflower/Pollinator mix. The bag of seed provided will cover a 20 ft x 20 ft plot (400 square feet).



Tall Grass Prairie mix is ideal for deer and pheasants.



Wildflower/Pollinator mix attracts butterflies and helps honeybees survive.

New this year: Upload pictures of your native prairies onto a statewide map! We're excited to provide this map so everyone can see the extent of their efforts to increase Nebraska Wildlife!

1. Visit cpnrd.com
2. Click on Grassland/Rangeland
3. Click on Go To Website link

Native Seed Handout: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Nov. 2 - 6 at CPNRD, 215 Kaufman Ave in Grand Island

Follow #Harvest2020 Progress Across the Country



Harvest is underway across the country, and we hope this year brings favorable harvest conditions and high yields. Join USDA in following the #Harvest2020 progress across the country.

Farmers, we invite you to share your harvest progress by sending an email to sharingoursuccesses@usda.gov. Upload landscape-oriented photos or videos under 10 seconds, a short description, your city and state and your Twitter handle (if you have one).

In addition to harvest photos, you can send photos and videos of preparing for harvest as well as those that show any challenges

along the way. This will be a way for you to show other farmers as well as Americans in general all of the hard work that goes into harvest on your farm.

Follow along by checking back in periodically to see new harvest photos and videos.

Important Dates

* January 1	Nitrogen Certification test due
* March 31	Crop Report forms due for Groundwater Management Program
* April 15	CPNRD-Ron Bishop Memorial College Scholarship applications due
* 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
* November 3	Election Day

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\$4.4 Million in New Funding Available for Soil Health

Are you interested in adding conservation practices, but have been deterred by the costs involved in changing your operation? Good news! \$4.4 million will soon be available for technical and financial assistance to producers for soil health improvement practices.



The Central Platte and Upper Big Blue NRDs are partnering with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and The Nature Conservancy on *Resilient Futures for Nebraska* soil health initiative through the Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Healthy cropland soils boost fertility and reduce water pollution; and provide stable yields, reduce erosion, improve nutrient availability and moisture holding capacity.

The goal of the initiative is to improve soil health on 100,000 acres of cropland over the next five years by implementing three soil health practices: cover crops, reduced tillage and diversified crop rotations. Payments will vary from \$15 to \$40 per acre depending on the practice implemented.

Uncapped Funding

The NRDs are looking to enroll a spectrum of producers - from those with no soil health experience to those who have already implemented practices. Producers with an existing practice, such as reduced tillage, may add a second or third practice for payment or could increase the practice such as moving from strip till to no-till. *There is no income cap for the payments and no maximum amount that one farm operation can receive.*

Carbon Marketplace

An exciting component for producers is access to the new Ecosystem Services Market Consortium. This carbon marketplace will connect companies looking to offset their carbon footprint with producers who implement soil health practices that capture carbon. Payments are guaranteed by acre and not tied to carbon storage. Carbon markets are an emerging field with many risks and unknowns, so this managed marketplace gives producers a low-risk way to approach this new opportunity to improve their operations. Participating companies include Cargill, Target, McDonald's and others.

It's important to note that producers also control the fate of their own data including who sees it, how it's used, where and how long the data is stored. With producer permission and anonymity controls in place, project data will be shared where possible to achieve the greatest public benefit.

Partners plan to register 20,000 acres in the first year with enrollment from December 2020 to March 2021.

To learn more about or to enroll in this RCPP program contact:

Courtney Widup, Central Platte NRD, widup@cpnrd.org (308) 385-6282 or John Bush, Upper Big Blue NRD, jbush@upperbigblue.org (402) 362-6601

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REMINDER: Update Crop Report Form After Harvest

Phases II & III Producers

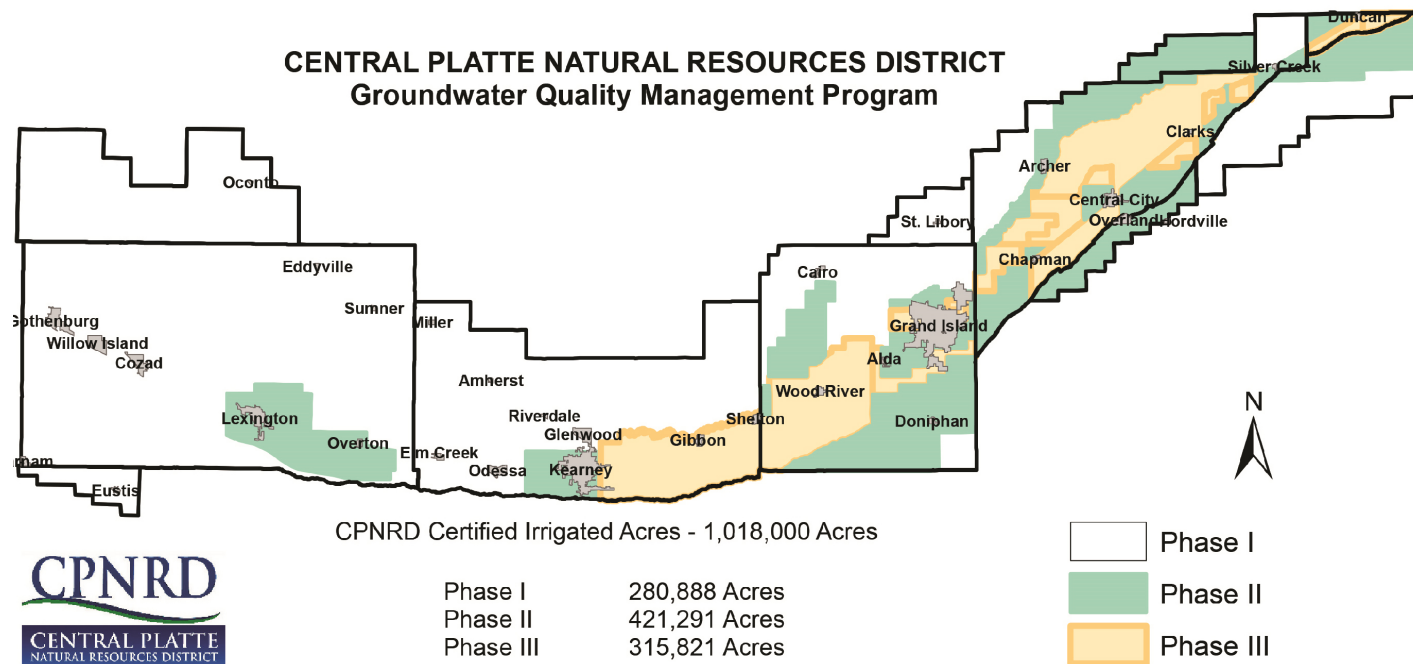
Producers in Phases II and III the NRD's Groundwater Management Program are reminded to update the online Crop Report Form with 2020 yields for all crops including corn, sorghum, potatoes, beans, alfalfa, small grains and any commodity crop. To complete the form, you'll need the legal description of the well(s) irrigating each crop and number of acres of each crop. To comply with the Nitrogen Management Program, the form must be submitted by March 31st at cpnrd.gisworkshop.com.

Water & Soil Tests Required

Producers planting corn, grain sorghum or potatoes in 2021 are required to take deep soil and groundwater samples to attach to the annual report. As you enter expected yields and credits for past legume crop and manure or sludge, UNL's recommended nitrogen application rate for 2021 will be calculated for you.

Water Samples: Groundwater analysis for nitrogen content should be taken on each field. Sample bottles are provided by your agronomist, crop consultant, or lab.

Soil Samples: Deep soils analysis for residual nitrogen (NO₃-N) are required on each field or 80-acre tract. The composite sample tested must consist of a mixture from no less than one 3-foot probe every 5 acres.



Transfer Applications Accepted through March 1st

Transfer applications are accepted between September 1st - March 1st for irrigated acre transfers. Landowners may request a change in the location of certified irrigated acres (transfer) provided that the same amount of water that would be depleted from the river over a 50-year period from consumptive use of groundwater withdrawals are retired from use (offset); and the offset occurs at the same time, rate, and location as the depletion identified by the Cooperative Hydrodrology Study (COHYST) model.

The location of the offset is considered the same as the depletion if the offset is:

- > west of the depletion
- > no more than 1 mile east of north/south line drawn along eastern edge of area causing the new depletion
- > within the same basin of influence

Offsets must be a minimum of 1 acre and any excess water would accrue to the benefit of streamflow. To learn more about transferring irrigated acres, contact Luke Zakrzewski or Angela Warner at (308) 385-6282.

Funds Available to Manage Volunteer Trees in Pastures

Producers in the Central Platte NRD are blessed with very productive rangelands that are home to livestock and wildlife such as turkey, deer, pheasants and quail. However, pastures are also prone to the unwanted spread of volunteer trees. In upland pastures, trees such as Eastern Red Cedar, Honey Locust and Siberian Elm can quickly spread and become a problem. Trees such as Salt Cedar (Tamarisk) and Russian Olive can spread quickly in low or wet pastures.

Because successful range management benefits everyone, the Central Platte implemented cost-share funding to address encroachment of volunteer trees. The goal of these unique programs is to increase understanding of successful range management and offer new practices to manage volunteer trees in pastures. The NRD's programs are summarized below. To learn more or to apply contact David Carr or Kelly Cole (308) 385-6282.

Funding Available to Manage Volunteer Trees

Programs	Objective	Approved Practices	Reimbursement Rates
Grazing Deferment	Promote successful prescribed burning and increase rangeland health.	Deferment of grazing for one growing season prior to the prescribed burn.	\$15 per acre deferred. Up to \$30,000 per landowner.
Prescribed Burn Preparation	Ensure safe prescribed burns through adequate burn boundary preparation.	Mechanical cutting and piling or mulching of unwanted trees to create a safe firebreak.	Cost-share is 50% up to \$75 per acre/landowner. Maximum of \$10,000
Prescribed Burn Cost-Share	Ensure safety of prescribed burns by encouraging use of insured contractors.	Use of an insured prescribed burn contractor to conduct a prescribed burn following all state and local laws.	Cost-share is 50% of actual cost or landowner share. Lifetime limit of \$2,500

New Floodplain Determination Benefits 1,600 Properties

Flood reduction projects are essential to protect homes, businesses and cropland in Nebraska. The Natural Resources Districts are tasked with preserving open floodways adjacent to streams and channels, while also reducing flood damage both upstream and downstream during storm events.

Over 1,600 property owners in Grand Island will see their flood insurance rates go down with the release of FEMA's new floodplain maps. The floodplain was reduced as a result of the Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Creek Flood Control Project that was completed in March 2019.

Flood mapping is an important part of the National Flood Insurance Program, as it is the basis of flood regulations and flood insurance requirements.

Properties north of Capital Avenue between the Burlington Northern Santa Fe elevated track on the east, Monitor Road on the west, and as far north as White Cloud Road will benefit most from the reduced floodplain. Houses north of Capital Avenue are now zoned for a 500-year flood event, reduced from a 100-year event.

To learn more visit: <http://cpnrd.org/flood-control/>

Students Help Diversify Tree Canopy in Grand Island



Success Academy principal, Ken DeFrank (right), teaches 8th grader Rogelio Pedro how to prepare a root ball for planting. Pedro is transitioning from Success Academy to Walnut Middle School.

The Success Academy of Grand Island recently teamed up with the Grand Island Parks Department to replace trees lost to disease and storms. Success Academy students received hands-on planting experience while learning the importance of having a diversified tree canopy for the community.

Throughout the semester, the students will also learn how to identify trees by their leaves and bark, which species grow well in central Nebraska, how trees affect water conservation, and why trees are good for combating greenhouse gases.

Students planted 22 trees along Grand Island Avenue from 13th Street to Capital Avenue including Commemoration Maple, Hackberry, White Oak, Butler Bur Oak, Relic Bur Oak, Douglas Red Oak, Shumark Oak and Black Oak.

Ken DeFrank, Success Academy principal, said the project was spurred by former Academy student Fran Lozoya who graduated in 2019. Lozoya contacted DeFrank after graduation and said he thought it was important for the Academy to plant more trees in Grand Island. That vision was realized later that year when students planted 38 trees at Eagle Scout Lake. The plantings on Grand Island Avenue are a continuation of that initial project.

Success Academy is Grand Island Public School's alternative education program for 6th-12th grades. The program offers non-traditional approaches for learners that address social, behavioral and academic needs.

Funding was provided by Central Platte NRD's Outdoor Classroom Program. Outdoor classrooms provide students the opportunity to engage in lessons in nature to ensure that youth have meaningful daily connections with the outdoors. To learn more visit [cpnrd.org/k-12 programs](http://cpnrd.org/k-12-programs).



Brian Peterson, 8th grade, compacts soil for a White Oak tree that he helped plant.

22 Outdoor Classrooms in CPNRD

Central Platte NRD's Outdoor Classroom Program provides funds to schools and communities to implement programs that focus on water, soil, wildlife, forestry, native prairies, wetlands and other nature awareness activities.

Outdoor Classroom for Schools

The NRD has funded 22 outdoor classrooms at school sites from Gothenburg to Columbus since 2001. The program provides up to \$2,500 per school per year. Requests over \$500 require matching funds or in-kind labor.

Funds may be used for materials needed to create or expand an outdoor classroom site on school grounds. Funds may be used for rain gardens, rain barrels, butterfly/pollinator gardens, seeds, bulbs, plants, trees, native grasses, wetland or pond habitat, bird and wildlife feeders, identification signs, etc.

Outdoor Classroom for Community Organizations

Community organizations and non-profit groups may request funds that provide natural resources awareness to the public or youth. This is a competitive grant with a maximum of \$2,000 per year.

Funds may be used to help with costs to promote indoor and outdoor conservation projects, presentations, print materials, activity materials, educational resources, etc. The community grant requires no matching funds. To learn more visit cpnrd.org/k-12 or contact Marcia Lee (308) 385-6282 or lee@cpnrd.org.