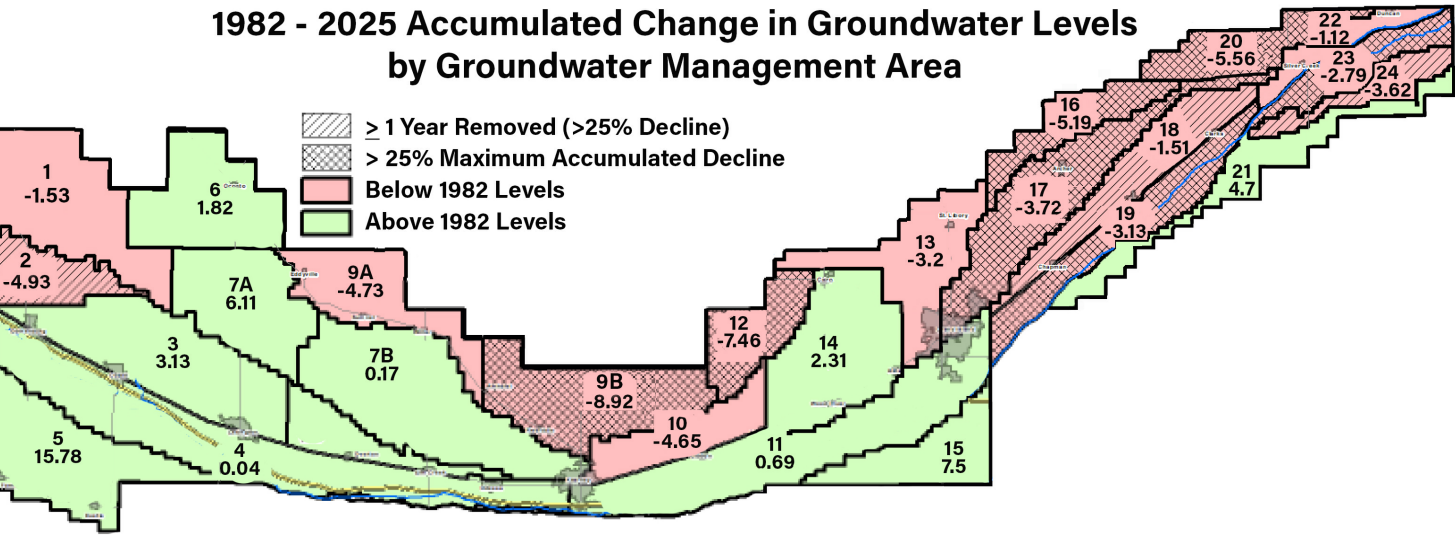


Groundwater Levels Remain Stable Across CPNRD

In June, Luke Zakrzewski, GIS Image Analyst, released the spring 2025 static groundwater levels, which showed a district-wide decline of just 0.80 feet compared to the 1982 baseline (see map below). The 1982 levels were established as the benchmark for CPNRD’s Groundwater Management Plan, which outlines maximum acceptable declines and a margin of safety for each Groundwater Management Area (GMA).

Since 1982, groundwater changes across the NRD’s 26 GMAs have ranged from an increase of 15.78 feet in GMA 5 (Frontier and Buffalo counties) to a decrease of 8.92 feet in GMA 9B (Buffalo County). Each spring, CPNRD staff collect readings from more than 400 wells to monitor groundwater levels. For the 2025 assessment, 416 wells were measured, which Zakrzewski noted equates to one well for every 2,500 irrigated acres.



As of August 21st, the U.S. Drought Monitor reported that severe dryness had expanded in the Sandhills, particularly in Cherry and nearby counties—while eastern Nebraska, including most areas within the Central Platte NRD, saw improvement following recent storms.

To learn more visit:
www.cpnrd.org/water-resources/groundwater-quantity

Your CPNRD Contact:
Luke Zakrzewski | 308-395-7672 | luke@cpnrd.org

EMAIL REQUEST
Communication with our producers is a top priority at the Central Platte NRD. To make the process more seamless, we are updating our records and collecting email addresses.
Please send your email address to: olson@cpnrd.org
Thank you in advance for your assistance!



Hosting Plains Showcase
September 9th at Central Platte NRD’s
Producer Site

Sentinel Ag is hosting its Plains Sentinel Showcase on Tuesday, September 9, just a short drive from Husker Harvest Days showgrounds. After a full day of exploring the latest in agricultural innovation, producers and ag professionals are invited to join Sentinel for an evening of food, drinks and meaningful conversation.

This in-person event will be held at a Central Platte NRD producer’s farm, one of Sentinel’s 2025 on-farm trial sites, offering attendees a firsthand look at how Sentinel Ag’s tools and insights are being applied directly in the field.

As a leader in enabling agile agronomy through data and innovative software, Sentinel Ag helps producers make smarter, faster decisions that drive profitability and efficiency. From precision nutrient management to real-time field analytics, the Sentinel platform supports the evolving needs of modern agriculture.

The showcase also highlights Sentinel’s partnership with Central Platte NRD, focusing on best practices in nitrogen management. Together, they will present strategies to optimize input use while protecting natural resources, reflecting a shared commitment to agronomic excellence and environmental stewardship across Nebraska.

Wood River, NE
September 9, 2025
4:30 PM -7:00 PM

No Cost to Attend!

“We hope you’ll join us for this unique opportunity to connect, learn and see innovation in action,” ~ Jackson Stansell, CEO & Founder of Sentinel Ag.

Join us after a day at Husker Harvest Days to enjoy good food, cold drinks, and some agronomy discussion. Location details will be provided to registered guests.

Register for Plains Sentinel Showcase at: www.sentinelag.tech/sentinel-showcases

Water Use Activities in 2024

From 2006-2014, Central Platte NRD certified historic groundwater and surface water irrigated acres, including variances and water bank transactions. To be certified as irrigated, the land must have been irrigated at least 2 out of the 10 years for the period of 1995 - July 26, 2004.

Land that is not currently certified cannot be irrigated. However, landowners may request a transfer - a change in the location of certified irrigated acres - if the same amount of water that would be depleted from the river over a 50-year period through groundwater use is retired (offset). The offset must occur at the same time, rate, and location as the new use. Transfer applications are accepted from September 1 - March 1.

At the end of 2024, the NRD had a total of 1,012,805 irrigated acres of which 936,059 acres are groundwater only; and 76,746 acres are co-mingled use. The overall irrigated acres base decreased 5,485 acres from 2010 to 2024.

In 2024, CPNRD approved 102 transactions of water use transfers with 906 acres transferred to new irrigated lands. 770 certified acres were used to offset the new uses. There were 1,676 total affected acres and no surface water or groundwater acres retired.

Your CPNRD Contact: Jesse Mintken | 308-395-7567 | mintken@cpnrd.org



IN PERSPECTIVE

Volume 30 No. 3
September 2025

Central Platte NRD Newsletter

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

Dawson County Envirothon Club Represents Nebraska on International Stage

Congratulations to the Dawson County Envirothon Club! After earning first place at the Nebraska State Envirothon, the team advanced to represent Nebraska at the NCF-Envirothon held July 20–26 at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

The competition challenged students with tests in aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a current environmental issue. Each team also gave a 20-minute presentation on this year’s theme: “Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change.”

Nebraska placed in the top ten for oral presentations, earning 8th place with a score of 177.33 out of 200 points. Overall, the Dawson County team finished 25th with 514.33 points. Top honors went to:

- First Place: Massachusetts (620.67 points, \$15,000 prize)
- Second Place: Maryland (619.67 points, \$10,000 prize)
- Third Place: New York (571.67 points, \$5,000 prize)

The Envirothon is an environmental and natural resources education competition reaching more than 25,000 high school students annually across the United States, Canada, and China. In Nebraska, regional contests are held in February and March, with 14 teams advancing to the state competition. The top team earns the right to represent the state at the international event.

The 2025 NCF-Envirothon hosted 50 teams from the U.S., Canada, and China. Next year’s competition will be held at Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi, July 19–25, 2026.

To learn more about the Envirothon visit www.nrdnet.org/nebraska-envirothon



Dawson County Envirothon Club at the NCF-Envirothon in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. From left: Janice Wolfinger, Paige Walahoski, Jaelin Wolfinger, Casey Wahlgren, Parker Walahoski, and Brooklyn Reiman.

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CENTRAL PLATTE NRD
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Member	Subdistrict
Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island	At-Large
Jay Richeson, Gothenburg	1
Brian Keiser, Gothenburg	1
Dwayne Margritz, Lexington	2
Tom Downey, Lexington	2
Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek	3
Vacant	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
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 updates straight to your inbox? Sign up for the *In Perspective Newsletter* today! Send your email address to lee@cpnrd.org

Board Vacancy in Subdistrict 3

The Central Platte NRD Board of Directors is accepting letters of intent for a vacancy in Subdistrict 3. Subdistrict 3 includes south-western Buffalo County and the very most southeastern corner of Dawson County. For further assistance in determining if you live in Subdistrict 3, contact CPNRD at 308-385-6282.

The term ends December 2026. Letters of intent can be sent to CPNRD, 215 Kaufman Avenue, Grand Island, NE 68803 or emailed to vogt@cpnrd.org.

Steve Sheen submitted his resignation in June. Sheen was elected to the Subdistrict 3 in 2007, succeeding Tom Brennan.

He served on the Board for 18 years and on several committees including Variance, Water Resources, Water Utilization, Western Projects and Programs.

The Search Committee, Marvion Reichert, Tom Downey, Brian Keiser and Deb VanMatre, will interview candidates to fill the vacancy.



Steve Sheen served on the Board from 2007 to June 2025.

2025/2026 Fiscal Budget Approved

The Fiscal Year 2025/2026 budget was approved in July following a public hearing. The budget totals \$31,799,740.74, a decrease from last year's budget of \$34,714,184.14.

The budget includes proposed expenditures, liabilities, necessary cash reserves, and county treasurer's commissions. Based on current balances and projected revenues, the property tax request for FY 2026 is \$5,347,834.31, a decrease of \$1,489.86 compared to FY 2025.

A public hearing to formally set the property tax request and levy will be held at 1:45 p.m. on Thursday, September 4, 2025, during the regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.



Chemigation Inspections Due

Deadline: September 15 Renewals

- Systems must be inspected every 3 years.
- No inspection = permit suspended and not renewed.
- Schedule inspection before shutting down wells.
- Inspections not completed by 6/1/2026, will be charged a new fee of \$60.00 instead of the \$20.00 renewal fee for the 2026 season.

New Systems

- Must be inspected before use and no later than Sept. 15.
- Permits/fees will not carry over to next year if not inspected.

Schedule Your Inspection Today!

Call (308) 385-6282. We'll do our best to provide next-day service.

Nitrate Contamination in Drinking Water

Note: This article is the first in a four-part series on nitrates from the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

What Are Nitrates?

Nitrogen is present in many forms in the environment and comes from both organic and inorganic sources. Nitrogen most commonly enters the soil as ammonia and is then converted to nitrate through a microbial oxidation process called nitrification.

Although nitrate is a naturally occurring ion essential to the interchange of nitrogen between the atmosphere, land, and living organisms, it can be harmful to human health. If elevated levels of nitrate are ingested through nitrate-contaminated drinking water, nitrate can oxidize iron in hemoglobin (a protein in red blood cells that transports oxygen) and produce toxic ferric ion (or "free ions"). When this process occurs in the human body, oxygen can no longer bind to hemoglobin and transforms into methemoglobin – a condition that, in excess, can cause cyanosis. Cyanosis, a condition indicating low oxygen levels in the blood, can lead to severe health complications and even death.

The acute health hazard associated with drinking water with elevated nitrate levels occurs when bacteria in the digestive system transform nitrate to nitrite. The nitrite reacts with iron in the hemoglobin of red blood cells to form methemoglobin, which lacks the oxygen-carrying ability of hemoglobin. This creates the condition known as methemoglobinemia (sometimes called "blue baby syndrome"), in which blood cannot carry sufficient oxygen to the cells in the body.

Nitrates in Groundwater

Water sources can become contaminated with high levels of nitrate due to run-off or leakage from fertilized soil, waste-water, landfills, animal feedlots, septic systems, or urban drainage. As a result, contamination can occur in groundwater and drinking water sources under both irrigated and non-irrigated lands. In the United States, approximately 45 million individuals have self-supplied water, with almost 98% of these coming from groundwater sources.

The remainder of the United States population receives its water from public water supplies, which can include ground-water, surface water or a combination thereof. In the United States, there has been a noted increase in nitrate levels in groundwater due to a number of factors, including an increased reliance on inorganic fertilizers and methods of waste disposal.

Nitrate in drinking water can come from natural, industrial, urban, agricultural, or residential sources, including septic systems and run-off. Levels of nitrate in drinking water can vary throughout the year. We ingest nitrates through the vegetables we eat, particularly leafy greens, and potentially through the water we drink.

Health Concerns Caused by Nitrate Contamination

In Nebraska, groundwater is a source of drinking water for approximately 85% of the state's population. The extensive use of irrigation and nitrogen fertilizers in Nebraska increases the risk of contaminating our aquifer systems and other groundwater sources.

While municipal water systems in towns and cities are required to test for and treat drinking water sources for elevated nitrate levels, Nebraskans who rely on private wells for drinking water are responsible for both testing and treating their well water for all contaminants, including nitrate. People who consume water with elevated levels of nitrate are at an increased risk of illness and other adverse health effects, including congenital disabilities, methemoglobinemia ("Blue Baby Syndrome"), pediatric cancers, thyroid conditions, and adult cancers, such as gastric and colorectal cancer.

Addressing the Issue

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. If you have a private domestic well, you can order a testing kit from the Nebraska Public Health Environmental Laboratory at: www.nebraska.gov/dhhs/water-test-kits/private.html.

To learn more about water quality and your health in Nebraska, visit the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Extension webpage: water.unl.edu/category/water-and-health



Congratulations to Our 25-26 College Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to the following students who have been selected as recipients of the CPNRD–Ron Bishop Memorial College Scholarship for the 2025–2026 academic year:

Braeden Anderson, Gothenburg – Sophomore at UNL majoring in Agronomy with a minor in the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program.

Gage Fryda, Kearney – Sophomore at UNL majoring in Agronomy with a minor in the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program.

Cooper Garrett, Grand Island – Junior at UNL majoring in Fisheries & Wildlife with a minor in Conservation Biology and Fisheries Ecology and Management.

The scholarship program provides \$1,000 awards to sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students who reside within the District and are pursuing degrees in natural resources–related fields.

To learn more visit www.cpnrd.org/education/scholarships

Your CPNRD Contact: Marcia Lee | 308-395-7551 | lee@cpnrd.org



Upcoming Conference: Strengthening Nebraska's Natural Legacy through Range Management

Join the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project and the Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management for their first-ever joint conference, "Forging a Path Forward," October 7–9 at UNL's East Union in Lincoln. Learn about rangeland sustainability, conservation practices and efforts to enhance Nebraska's at-risk species and habitats.

Dates: October 7–9, 2025

Location: UNL East Union, 1705 Arbor Drive, Lincoln, NE

Cost: General – \$115 | Students, Master Naturalists, guests – \$50

Deadline: Register by September 19, 2025

Register at: <https://agronomy.unl.edu/SRM-NGPC-Conference>

**30 Feet at a Time:
A Landowner's Story of
Stewardship and Soil Health**



Check out this new video on the Soil Carbon Project!

Central Platte NRD YouTube Channel
www.youtube.com/@centralplattenrd2157

Central Platte NRD Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/CentralPlatteNRD/

Brody Vorderstrasse, Communications Assistant, has produced a new video featuring the Nebraska Soil Carbon Project. The video tells the story of Willie, a fourth-generation Nebraska farmer and rural mail carrier, who balances life behind a desk, on the road, and in the field—30 feet at a time.

Since planting his first cover crop in 2021 and joining the Nebraska Soil Carbon Project, Willie has seen firsthand how soil health practices like cover crops, reduced tillage, and diversified rotations protect both his land and his livelihood. With cost-share support from Central Platte NRD and NRCS, he's proving that even small-scale operations can make a big impact. Whether you farm 10 acres or 10,000, Willie's advice is simple: *Give it a try*.

Learn more about the Nebraska Soil Carbon Project: www.cpnrd.org/land-management/soil-health

Follow Central Platte NRD

