

SOUTH PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

# PIPELINE

NEWSLETTER



## SOUTH PLATTE VALLEY GROUND WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT SUBAREA

Nebraska’s NRDs use regulations in different combinations and to different degrees depending on their respective geographic areas of concern and direction from their locally elected board of directors. One of the 12 Areas of Responsibilities for NRDs is water, specifically, ground water. The ultimate goal is to protect those areas through conservation, quality and management. With that being said, the SPNRD has been monitoring nitrates in the District for 34 years through our network of 167 irrigation, domestic, and monitoring wells.

The South Platte Valley Ground Water Quality Management Subarea (SPVGWQMSA) in Deuel County has seen a steady increase in nitrate-nitrogen composite averages. Due to the elevated nitrate levels in the ground water system, the SPNRD Board of Directors (Board) directed staff to begin the process of transitioning the SPVGWQMSA from a Phase I to Phase II management system. To reiterate, our Phases are as follows:

- Phase I: nitrate-nitrogen levels of 6.5 ppm average for 3 consecutive years
- Phase II: nitrate-nitrogen levels of 8.0 ppm average for 3 consecutive years
- Phase III: nitrate-nitrogen levels of 9.5 ppm average for 3 consecutive years

In reference to phases, NRDs utilize trigger points to signify specific levels of nitrate in ground water. Triggers are in place to protect the drinking water supply and may vary within the individual NRD boundary, but are relative to the safe drinking water standards mandated federally. The higher the Phase, the more implementation of management efforts for protection is required. Transitioning phases entails amending rules and regulations for the ground water quality controls for the subarea. This involves a review of the proposed changes by SPNRD Projects & Programs Committee and Board, legal counsel, other state agencies (*Nebr. Rev. Stat. § 46-743 (7)*), and the public through public information meetings and a public hearing. The process began in January 2023 and, during the June 13, 2023 board meeting, the Board issued an Order to adopt the amendments to the Rules and Regulations and to begin Phase II Controls in the SPVGWQMSA. The effective date of the Order and implementation of the amendments is July 13, 2023.

These changes will affect irrigated agricultural lands in the Deuel County South Platte River Valley. Landowners and producers who are required to abide by the Phase II Controls were invited and encouraged to participate in the public information meetings and hearing.

For more information about South Platte NRD’s Ground Water Management Area Rules and Regulations, visit [www.spnrd.org](http://www.spnrd.org). Questions about the rule changes should be directed to Ryan Reisdorff, (308) 254-2377, [reisdorff@spnrd.org](mailto:reisdorff@spnrd.org). For the 12 Responsibilities of Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts, visit [www.nrdnet.org/nrds/about-nrds](http://www.nrdnet.org/nrds/about-nrds).

### BOARD MEETINGS

Board of Director Meetings are hosted the second Tuesday of every month at the South Platte NRD office located at 551 Parkland Drive, Sidney, NE.

### BOARD MEETING DATES

- August 8, 2023
- September 12, 2023
- October 10, 2023

# PROGRAM UPDATES

## SPNRD PARTNERS WITH ESU 13 TO OFFER NATURAL RESOURCES DAY

This event was previously called Western Nebraska Children's Ground Water Festival and was last held in May 2019, marking its 29th anniversary. Unfortunately, due to COVID and staff changes, we were not able to host the past three years. Fortunately, we partnered with ESU 13 this year and re-introduced it as Natural Resources Day, focusing on more topics than ground water. This event is an opportunity for fourth grade students in our district to learn more about natural resources in an interactive and hands-on outdoor environment. We have developed partnerships with multiple agencies that are excited to share their expertise and knowledge with us. On May 1, 2023, approximately 125 fourth graders participated in eight, 25-minute stations which included water, soil, rocks, prairie plants, trees, geocaching, birds, and fish. Our first Natural Resources Day was a huge success and we plan to offer for many years to come!



From left: Duck Duck Guess - Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Tree Factory - North Platte NRD, The Great Bird Olympics - Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Fishy Friends - Nebraska Game and Parks. Other stations were Earthworms and Soil - Natural Resources Conservation Service, ROCK Around the CLOCK - ESU 13, Prairie Plants - Pheasants Forever, Inc., and Geocaching: A Race to the Unknown - UNL Extension.

## 2023 RANGE JUDGING - AREA 1 CONTEST IN KIMBALL COUNTY

Range Judging is a high school competition that challenges students to gain a better understanding of Nebraska rangelands which makes up half of the State's land area. It also enables each participant to learn how to recognize range plants, range sites and the need for proper grazing practices. NRDs work with the Society of Range Management, NRCS and UNL Extension to host Range Judging contests. SPNRD will be hosting this year's Range Judging - Area 1 contest in Kimball County on September 19, 2023. The State Range Judging Contest will be hosted by Lower Big Blue NRD in Saline County on September 26-27th.

## 2023 TREE PROGRAM WRAPS UP



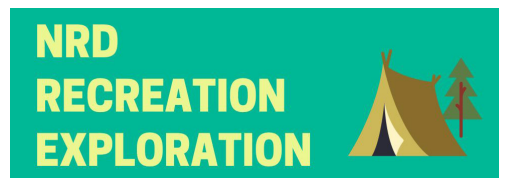
Each year, Nebraska's NRDs provide a low-cost, wide variety of bulk trees and shrubs to encourage tree planting. SPNRD collects orders from October through the end of March, and distributes in time for spring planting. The majority of NRD conservation trees are sourced from Bessey Nursery in Halsey, Nebraska. This spring the SPNRD sold 93,606 trees and shrubs and donated various trees to youth programs, Arbor Day events and tree-drawings at county fairs in our district. Thank you to everyone who purchased and planted trees! Mark your calendar for our 2024 Tree Program, some species sell out quickly, so if you prefer a particular type of tree, order early!

To make tree planting more accessible, we offer cost share through our Conservation Tree Program and Community Forestry Programs. Although the district does not plant trees, we have a tree planter rental and a list of several certified contractors to provide planting services. For more information about our tree programs, tree care and cost share opportunities, contact Chris Kaiser, Natural Resources Conservationist or visit [spnrd.org/forestry](http://spnrd.org/forestry).

## GET OUTDOORS AND EXPLORE NEBRASKA'S 80+ NRD RECREATION AREAS!

**WIN PRIZES! JOIN THE FUN!** 1. Visit an NRD recreation area, 2. Take a photo with the rec sign or landmark, 3. Submit your photo to win various prizes at [www.nrdnet.org/recreation](http://www.nrdnet.org/recreation).

Visit Oliver Reservoir Recreation Area (ORRA)! ORRA is located eight miles west of Kimball, Nebraska on US Hwy 30. ORRA offers fishing, boating, camping, and nature walking. Learn more at [www.spnrd.org/oliverreservoir](http://www.spnrd.org/oliverreservoir).



# SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## SPNRD AWARDS TWO - \$500 SCHOLARSHIPS

We are pleased to announce the following two recipients of this year's scholarship program. We are honored to serve and invest in the future of our communities by supporting youth to further their education. We received several outstanding applications, thank you to each student who completed the process. **Congratulations and best wishes to ALL graduates!**



**Justin Ernest** - Graduate of Leyton High School  
Justin will be attending Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, Major: Veterinary Technician. He is the son of Christopher & Bobbi Ernest of Dalton.



**Kailey Nicklas** - Graduate of Potter-Dix High School  
Kailey will be attending Chadron State College, Major: Agribusiness. She is the daughter of Joe and Sara Nicklas of Potter.

## RECHARGING THE AQUIFER

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) tracks the Platte River to monitor the availability of excess flow of water. Large precipitation events and hydrologic condition designations are two of several determinants to flows. If excess flow is available, DNR processes requests and approves active recharge appropriations. SPNRD received permission this year to divert water from the South Platte River to recharge pits via the Western Canal. The diverted water will soak into the ground to recharge the aquifer, and gradually re-enter the river.

The previous excess flow event occurred in 2020. During this year's event, Assistant Manager Ryan Reisdorff and Water Resources Specialist Travis Glanz opened gates to deliver water into Western Canal recharge pits. SPNRD has a total of 13 recharge pits and 12 were used. Each pit holds up to ten feet of water, and depending on the soil, will fill with water or soak in as quickly as the water enters.

Excess flow is a collaborative effort with the DNR, Twin Platte NRD, Western Irrigation District, and local landowners in Deuel and Keith counties.





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**(308) 254-2377**  
**Visit [spnrd.org](http://spnrd.org)**

This is an official publication  
 of the South Platte Natural  
 Resources District.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Halligan	Chair
Chris Meyer	Vice Chair
James C. Johnson	Secretary
Tim Maas	
Marc Sprenger	
Kathy Narjes	
Larry L. Rutt	

## Hats Off to Ag Women

Sidney Women in Agriculture  
 Conference

Friday, August 4th, 2023

8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. | Elks Lodge

Visit [go.unl.edu/sidney](http://go.unl.edu/sidney)

This program is held in partnership with Nebraska  
 Women in Agriculture.

## SPNRD STAFF

Galen Wittrock	General Manager
Ryan Reisdorff	Assistant Manager
Don Davis	Administrative Manager
NaManet Keller	District Secretary/Bookkeeper
Travis Glanz	Water Resources Specialist
Chris Kaiser	Natural Resources Conservationist
Tyler Sanders	Water Resources Coordinator
Michelle McMillen	NRCS/NRD Field Office Secretary
Yolanda Hruska	Information & Education Coordinator

## ARTICLES INSIDE

South Platte Valley	Page 1
Program Updates	Page 2
Scholarship Recipients	Page 3
Recharging the Aquifer	Page 3