

KNOW YOUR NRD



Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

Spring, 2014



About 150 people filled the American Legion hall in Valparaiso, January 9, to discuss proposed ground water rules changes with NRD directors and staff. Many who testified at the public hearing asked the NRD Board to modify its proposed annual allocations for irrigators in the Dwight-Valparaiso-Brainard area. The Board responded to those concerns by approving 3-year allocations with an annual maximum. Several other measures, including education certifications, special cost-sharing and the creation of a stakeholder advisory group were included in the changes. Learn more on page 4.

Beginnings

by NRD Board Chair Greg Osborn



It was an honor to be elected 2014 NRD Board Chair. It comes at an exciting time, with expected approval this month of our Integrated Management Plan with the state, implementation of new

rules protecting ground water users in the Dwight-Valparaiso-Brainard area and the federal start of a major flood control study in Lincoln's Deadman's Run watershed.

Other activities in the year ahead include dam rehabilitations, rehabs of many Salt Creek Levee drainage structures, restoration of wetlands, continued Platte River obstruction removals and making progress toward extending the MoPac East Trail. I thank the Board for electing me as Chair and look forward to continued work with my fellow Directors and Staff toward the protection of lives, property and the future.

Protecting Lives • Protecting Property • Protecting the Future

Order Seedlings Now – With Plastic!

Orders for NRD seedling trees and shrubs especially suitable for windbreaks and wildlife habitat are being accepted until February 28th. The seedlings are sold in bare root bundles of 25, which is the new minimum order. We combine orders with Nebraska's 22 other NRDs to get a great price and each spring, statewide, more than one million of the seedling trees and shrubs are planted!

Besides a lower minimum order of 25 trees or shrubs, new this

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It's an Election Year

Voters will select Lower Platte South NRD Board members this year. The deadline for incumbents to file for NRD Board Primary Election candidacy is February 18. The deadline for non-incumbents is March 3. The Primary Election is May 13. NRD races will appear on Primary ballots only if there are more than two candidates. The General Election is November 4.

There are 21 NRD Board



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Water Shortages Yield Rule Changes

In the summers of 2012 and 2013, the NRD received enough reports of well owners experiencing supply issues that we imposed a 180-day moratorium on new wells and new certifications of irrigated acres in September of 2013. The moratorium, in the Dwight-Valparaiso-Brainard (DVB) area of the District, gave the NRD a chance to investigate how widespread the problems were and whether changes might be in order to try and prevent future occurrences.

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Online Payment

Order Seedlings Now – With Plastic!

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year is the addition of online payment. Participants may place their order at Ipsnrd.org, securely make their payment using a credit card, then pick up their order from our custom tree cooler when they're ready to plant in April or May.

Those who order 750 seedlings or more can have the NRD plant them free of charge. We will also plant orders of between 200 and 725 seedlings for \$0.70 per plant. Many varieties are still available. Visit Ipsnrd.org to learn more and to order.

Digital conservation

You can have *Know Your NRD* sent directly to your inbox BEFORE it's published. The electronic version contains links and enhancements to help you keep up with the latest NRD activities. Your email address will not be shared. See Ipsnrd.org and click on Publications.

Did you know...

There is an interactive map on the NRD web site that helps constituents learn what subdistrict they live in, and what the boundaries are? Visit Ipsnrd.org, click on Publications, Maps, then Subdistricts. This feature is especially useful at election time!

Legislative Watch

Each Legislative Session, Nebraska's NRDs identify introduced bills that would somehow impact NRD interests. Our annual legislative Conference was held January 28 and 29 in Lincoln and here are some proposals we'll be watching:

Legislative Resolution 416 would authorize casino gambling and send a portion of taxes on proceeds to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources for water funding.

LB 896 would make various updates to the Erosion and Sediment Control Act.

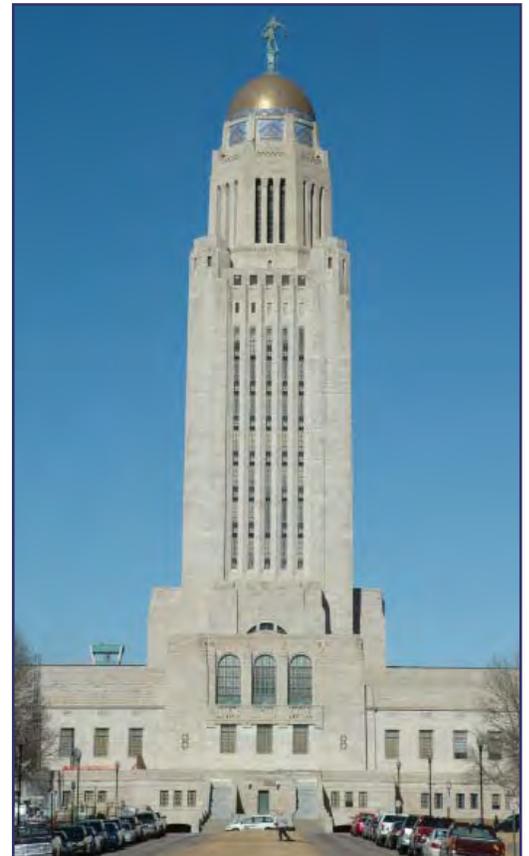
LB 940 & LB 1046 would each create the Water Sustainability Fund for water projects and activities. Each, though, calls for a different source of funding.

LB 1003 would allow all NRDs to issue general obligation bonds to fund non-revenue-producing water projects

LB 1005 would replace the Inter-related Water Review Board, created in 2004, with the Surface Water and Ground Water Review Board, which would also have expanded powers.

LB 1037 authorizes the Auditor of Public Accounts to conduct additional audits of entities consisting of more than one NRD, when the entity was formed by an interlocal agreement.

LB 1098 would expand the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission from 13 members to 27.



Every Vote Counts

It's an Election Year

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members; two from each of ten subdistricts and one At-Large member. They serve four-year terms with 10 or 11 members elected every two years. The At-Large seat is up for election this year. Besides holding regular monthly meetings, the Board operates several standing and special subcommittees composed of, typically, eight directors who make recommendations to the full Board.



Last year, the NRD Board appointed two members to vacated seats that must also be elected this year, under state law. They are in subdistricts 3 and 4. More information about the NRD Board of Directors is available at Ipsnrd.org. Click on About Us, then Board. From that page you can also link to an interactive map to determine in what NRD subdistrict an address is located. You may also contact the NRD.



DeKalb Appointed to Board

Mike DeKalb was appointed in December to fill the Subdistrict 3 seat left vacant by the September death of Director Larry Swanson. DeKalb is retired from the City of Lincoln Lancaster County Planning Department, where he worked in many capacities for 36 years. The 1970 UNL graduate with a degree in architecture and urban design said he subscribes to a saying that is the basic premise of what he wants to accomplish on the NRD Board, "We are all custodians of this Earth for our children." Welcome Mike!



NRD Board

Here are your NRD Board representatives. The Board meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month at the NRD office in Lincoln. More information is available at Ipsnrd.org, click on About Us, then Board.

Subdistrict

- 1 Don Jacobson, W Lincoln
David Potter, Valparaiso
- 2 Daryl Bohac, Waverly
Roger Gaebel, Louisville
- 3 Mike DeKalb, NE Lincoln
Ron Case, NE Lincoln
- 4 Larry Ruth, SE Lincoln
Joe Skopp, SE Lincoln
- 5 Greg Osborn, W Lincoln
Steve Larrick, W Lincoln
- 6 Doug Samuelson, NW Lincoln
Elaine Hammer, NW Lincoln
- 7 Ann Bleed, NE Lincoln
Richard Bolte, NE Lincoln
- 8 Larry Hall, SE Lincoln
Ron Svoboda, SE Lincoln
- 9 Milt Schmidt, SE Lincoln
Bob Andersen, SE Lincoln
- 10 Ray Stevens, SW Lincoln
Karen Amen, SW Lincoln

At-large

David Landis, Lincoln



Erosion Repair

Work was completed late in 2013 to repair severe erosion problems along Lincoln's Deadmans Run channel, behind Home Depot at 27th Street and Cornhusker Avenue. Vegetation will sprout in the spring from the matting material in the photo at left. The project was completed by Pat Thomas Construction at a cost of about \$231,000.

Public Heard

Water Shortages Yield Rule Changes

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By January, we had surveyed landowners in the moratorium area and proposed changes to the District's Ground Water Rules and Regulations. Of 775 surveys sent to moratorium area landowners, more than 300 responded, with over 50 respondents saying they had experienced some kind of well problem in the last two years.

On January 9, at a public hearing in Valparaiso, the NRD took testimony on several proposals made in response to the survey. Many who testified asked the NRD to ease proposed allocations giving DVB irrigators seven acre inches to apply to their crops each year. An acre inch is the amount of water it takes to cover one acre one inch deep. The NRD's Water Resources Subcommittee heard more public comment when it met January 13 and changed its pivot irrigation recommendation to the full Board to 21 acre inches over three years, with no more than 9 acre inches being applied in a single year. The recommendation for gravity irrigators was changed from 10 acre inches per year to 30 acre inches over three years, with no more than 12 acre inches applied in a single year. After about 90 minutes of discussion and more public comment, on January 15 the NRD Board approved the Rules and Regulations changes with one amendment requiring the NRD to establish a stakeholder advisory group of DVB water users. Here are the changes that will take effect on March 1:



Well owners and others study exhibits and talk with NRD Directors and staff prior to a January 9 public hearing on NRD ground water rules changes.

New Board Officers

A new slate of NRD Board officers was elected in January for 2014:

Chair - Greg Osborn
Vice-Chair - David Landis
Treasurer - Ray Stevens
Secretary - Roger Gabel
NARD Board Representative - David Potter
NARD Alternate - Karen Amen

Congratulations!

- A continued stay on the certification of additional ground water irrigated acres
- Allocations on ground water used for irrigation; 21 acre-inches over three years, with no more than 9 acre inches applied in any one year for sprinkler irrigation and 30 acre-inches over three years, with no more than 12 acre inches applied in any one year through gravity irrigation systems.
- Educational certifications for irrigators
- Establishment of a stakeholder advisory group
- Special cost-sharing by the NRD
- Require new wells to be of adequate depth
- Formal consideration of any new or replacement well by the NRD Board

The NRD Board's goal in approving these changes to its Ground Water Rules and Regulations is to help all wells in the DVB area during summer irrigation seasons. Our Ground Water Rules & Regulations can be changed at any time and with the help of the stakeholder advisory group, which will be formed later this year, the Board will be monitoring for needed adjustments.

Get Wet & Learn!

Professionals Help Students

It only seems logical that a high school located adjacent to one of the most rare land types on the planet takes advantage. Lincoln's North Star High School is just south of a complex of saline wetland properties many call Whitehead Saline Wetlands, along North 27th Street near Interstate 80. North Star students and teachers do their best to learn about Nebraska's most rare and threatened natural community. It is one of two high schools in Lincoln that offers an Environmental Studies class. Tracy Chapo, winner of the Nebraska Association of Resources District's "Educator of the Year" award in 2011, teaches the North Star class. Her Environmental Studies curriculum includes lots of time in the wetlands and some of that time is orchestrated by Tom Malmstrom, coordinator of the Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership. Malmstrom meets students in the Environmental Studies class on several Fridays during the fall months and they venture out to Whitehead to learn more from a representative of a Partnership member organization like Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, University of Nebraska or, many times, the NRD.

Each fall, Malmstrom and the volunteer experts, like NRD Water Resources Specialist Dick Ehrman, make presentations to the class. Ehrman said, "We take the class out to Whitehead and give them a demonstration on how we collect well data and talk about how that data relates back to the formation of saline wetlands." Malmstrom said, "Most of the same volunteers have been presenting to the students since the program began, in 2005. Students always seem to get more out of an actual field experience than being told about it in a classroom or reading a textbook."

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Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership Coordinator Tom Malmstrom (back-left) has North Star students ready for a visit to Whitehead Saline Wetlands.

Tributary Award

The Cornhusker Chapter of Pheasants Forever received the NRD's Tributary Award in January for their partnering with the NRD on a recent grassland restoration project at Meadowlark Lake. The award also recognized the organization's habitat enhancement activities and its promotion of the NRD's annual seedling tree sales.

Protecting Lives, Property, Future

Professionals Help Students

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Other presentations each year feature the benefits and wonders of wetland soils, hydrology, stream invertebrates and water quality, wetland management and conservation, urban open spaces, entomology and more. Ehrman said he enjoys the interaction with the students and gets a feeling of satisfaction that he, “may be helping one or more students decide to make a career of geology or a related field.” For Malmstrom, the program has become a way to help young people realize the importance of understanding and preserving our environment.



NRD Water Resources Specialist Dick Ehrman helps a North Star High School Environmental Studies student test a water sample for temperature, pH and conductivity using a hand-held water quality meter.

20th Festival!

The 20th Earth Wellness Festival is March 26 & 27 at Southeast Community College, where 3,100 fifth graders will learn more about land, water, air and living resources. Thanks to the many who have made presentations and volunteered their time over the years and who continue to help make this event a highlight for fifth graders throughout the District.

Camp Scholarships

When planning their summer, middle school-aged students should consider Adventure Camp about the Environment or ACE Camp! The annual camp is held each June at the State 4H Center, near Halsey and the Lower Platte South NRD offers scholarships. Learn more by looking for the ACE Camp link at Ipsnrd.org.

NRD Project Update

Salt Creek Levee Drainage Structure Repairs, Lincoln - Under construction. Three separate contracts totaling about \$1.5 million; NRD 100%.

Stevens Creek Master Plan #17, 98th & Van Dorn, Lincoln - Stream stability project. Under construction, \$400,000; NRD 50%, Lincoln 50%.

Stevens Creek Master Plan #5, 7, 8 & 9, Adams to Holdrege near 112th Street - Stream stability projects. Right-of-way acquisition phase. NRD 50%, Lincoln 50%.

Haymarket Ballpark Trail Extension, Lincoln - Charleston to 14th Street. Design/Environmental Review Phase. Estimated total cost, \$935,000; NRD 20%, Federal Transportation Enhancement 80%. Construction this spring.

Piening Dam, Hwy34 & Lancaster-Seward Co. Line - Flood control dam above Pawnee Lake. Construction est. \$225,000; NRD & landowner. Permitting phase.

Havlat Seward Co. Road Structure, south of Pleasant Dale - Design and right-of-way acquisition currently underway. Construction est. \$352,000; NRD 75%, Seward County 25%.