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## **NRD Budget Approved – Tax Levy Reduced**

Lincoln (NE) August 16, 2018 – The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) Board of Directors gave final approval to the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget at their monthly meeting in Lincoln on Wednesday. LPSNRD Board Treasurer Dan Steinkruger said the \$29.9M budget, “meets specific responsibilities, goals and objectives, providing for large projects like the Deadmans Run Flood Reduction Project, as-well-as continued maintenance of existing projects and involvement in finding better ways to conserve soil and water.”

The budget includes \$2.1 million to begin work on the \$25 million Deadmans Run Flood Reduction Project that would remove more than 500 structures from the floodplain in north Lincoln. After a multi-year Section 205 Study of Lincoln’s Deadmans Run watershed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, LPSNRD anticipates word soon on whether \$10 million in federal funding has been approved. If federal funds are approved and LPSNRD and the City of Lincoln each approve their own share of funds, design of the project could begin this fall.

The \$29,996,404 budget of revenues and expenditures supports Deadmans Run approval and many more programs and projects to manage and protect natural resources through next June. With property valuations across the district’s six-county area expected to increase approximately 4%, the resulting tax levy would be reduced from last year. The property tax requirement is \$9,673,210, an increase of approximately 1.8% from last year. Board approval followed an August 9th public hearing and other public input opportunities since mid-June.

LPSNRD, the City of Lincoln and several other agencies and groups are involved in the acquisition of conservation easements/land for the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch Project, a 10-mile tall grass prairie preservation & trail corridor between Lincoln’s Pioneers Park, Conestoga Lake, Denton and Spring Creek Prairie. The Board and City of Lincoln approved a 20-year agreement for the project earlier in 2018. The new budget includes \$1.2 million for the project.

Continued updating of Lincoln's Salt Creek Levee, which protects many businesses and neighborhoods from flooding, is approximately a \$1 million budget item. About \$1.5 million is in the budget for cost-sharing with landowners who install improvements to their land that improve surface water quality. The budget for construction and maintenance of flood control dams and for maintaining stream channels and stormwater facilities totals about \$4.8 million. Nearly \$1 million is set aside for the management of ground water.

LPSNRD's continued participation in several multi-agency studies and projects is also part of the budget (\$1.5 million). A plan to improve water availability to municipalities in the lower Platte River basin during times of drought is expected in 2019. In addition, eastern Nebraska NRDs continue to improve our understanding of the complex ground water aquifers in the region and improve ground water management.

The complete budget and other budget information are available at [LPSNRD.org](http://LPSNRD.org).

In other action, the Board:

- Approved a \$60,000 grant agreement with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency to update LPSNRD's Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Approved cost-sharing with 122 landowners on water quality best management practices totaling \$1.2M.
- Approved the LPSNRD Cover Crop Program and obligated \$50,000 for this fall (apply now at your local USDA/NRCS Office). Eligible areas include the watershed area of most public access Salt Valley Lakes, many wellhead protection areas, and Phase 2 & 3 ground water management areas. Payments are \$25-\$30/acre.
- Authorized negotiations on one conservation easement (Davis-Becker LLC) and counter-offered on the purchase of another tract (Samani), both parcels are in the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch Project area.
- Approved \$7,000 in matching funds for a UNL School of Natural Resources' Environmental Trust grant for the Master Naturalist program.
- Heard a report on the State (Dept of Natural Resources) and LPSNRD's Integrated Management Plan Annual Report and discussed our water management activities for both surface and ground water.
- Approved a youth Mentored Hunt Agreement with the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission for the Warner Wetland Property.
- Approved the purchase of a slope mower for project maintenance.
- Moved the November and December Board meetings to the second Wednesday of the month.

The next meeting of the LPSNRD Board is on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018, starting at 7:00 PM at the NRD office, 3125 Portia Street, in Lincoln, and the public is encouraged to attend. An agenda will be posted one week prior to the meeting at [LPSNRD.org](http://LPSNRD.org).