

Projects Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 29, 2016 8:00 AM
Lower Platte North NRD Office
P.O. Box 126
Wahoo, NE 68066

1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business to address.

2. SWCP

Eric Gottschalk reviewed the attached SWCP status report with the committee. It was reported that the Governor's budget reductions reduced our SWCP allocation 4 percent, leaving \$109,594 available for conservation practice cost share. Of this adjusted total, \$97,732 (89%) has been spent to date.

2.A. SWCP Application Approvals

Dayle Alswager	Emergency Terrace Repair	\$ 1,000.00
----------------	--------------------------	-------------

2.B. SWCP Payments

16-D-11	Darlene Kroeger & Dorothy Vacek	Tile/Terrace Extention	\$ 1,547.00
---------	---------------------------------	------------------------	-------------

2.C. SWCP Cancellations

None

2.D. Wahoo Creek Cost Share Approvals

Darrell Kubik	Lands for Conservation	\$ 2,891.70	15.3 acres
---------------	------------------------	-------------	------------

2.E. Wahoo Creek 319 Payments

Lands for Conservation Payments:

Douglas Kavan	\$ 4,232.00	23 acres
---------------	-------------	----------

2.F. SWCP Policy Review

The committee again reviewed the attached draft SWCP Policy and suggested changes. The draft shows NRCS District Conservationist, Mark Walkenhorst's proposed changes for consideration. It was discussed by Director Clausen that for the Lands for Conservation practice, that corn not be included as a cover crop or have a 35% payment reduction if corn is used. After further discussion it was suggested that corn or other fall harvest-able grain crops not be allowed as cover crops under the LFC practice. The committee will bring this and other suggested SWCP policy changes forward for eventual Board approval by the April 10 Board meeting.

3. WATERSHEDS

3.A. Shell Creek Watershed

3.A.1. Shell Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan Approved

Great news was received as the Shell Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan has been approved by EPA which now opens the door for obtaining federal grant assistance to help construct four designed Shell Creek Projects that are on the shelf and ready to construct. The next step is to get a Project Implementation Plan approved by EPA and then a funding agreement approved by NDEQ.

3.A.2. Shell Creek Environmental Enhancement Plan Implementation 319 Project

As mentioned in 3.a.1. above, now that the Shell Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan has been approved by EPA, Mountford has been working with NDEQ on completing a Project Implementation Plan (PIP). When approved by EPA, this will make available federal 319 grant assistance to help construct four designed Shell Creek Projects that are on the shelf and ready to construct. The largest of the designed group of projects is the "Kramer Bank Stabilization Project", which is to stabilize a portion of Shell Creek located near Colfax County's bridge (C001901915) on County road 10, just north of road H. This project has received a 404 permit from the USACE earlier this month. We have approximately \$145,000 of approved grant funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and another \$100,000 to \$150,000 is anticipated from NDEQ. After the PIP is approved by EPA and a funding agreement is approved by NDEQ, we will be ready to begin construction activities.

On December 8th, a planning meeting with NDEQ was held at the Columbus NRCS Field Office, to discuss next steps for Shell Creek Environmental Enhancement Plan Implementation. A major part of the meeting was to plan the use of an additional \$150,000 of NRCS Water Quality Initiative Funds that have recently been approved for the watershed.

3.A.3. Shell Creek Landowner Levee Project Update

Director Bailey reported that the no-rise certificate has been approved and the USACE has provided some needed project information to the landowners. The project design is now being reviewed by USACE and the hope is that no 404 permit will be required and the project be deemed ready to move toward construction.

3.B. Wahoo Creek Watershed

3.B.1. Wahoo Creek Dam Sites 26 & 27 Regional Partnership Program Funds Awarded

Last week, we received notice (letter attached) that NRCS has approved our Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) application to help construct two Watershed Flood Control Dams, sites 26 and 27. These are two of the ten previously identified sites in NRCS's 1998 Wahoo Creek Watershed Plan. Over the next several weeks, Mountford will be working with NRCS on a funding agreement for using the approved funds over a five

year period. As outlined in our application's narrative section (as attached - page 10, question .9), we requested 50% (\$1,589,300) of an estimated total project expense of \$3,178,600. We learned that NRCS has allocated \$1, 500,000 toward our requested amount, but we are waiting to work out the final details.

Below is NRCS's notification of our RCPP application approval as shown on their website. (The other Nebraska RCPP application approved was for the Upper Big Blue NRD)

Investing in Nebraska

In 2017, NRCS is investing up to \$225 million in 88 projects that impact nearly every state in the nation, including two in Nebraska. Since 2014, NRCS has invested more than \$825 million in 286 high-impact projects, bringing together more than 2,000 conservation partners who have invested an additional \$1.4 billion. By 2018, NRCS and partners will have invested at least \$2.4 billion. These projects are leading to cleaner and more abundant water, better soil and air quality, enhance wildlife habitat, more resilient and productive agricultural lands and stronger rural economies.

2017 RCPP Projects in Nebraska

Wahoo Creek Water Quality Sites 26 and 27

- *Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1,500,000 (Critical Conservation Area – Prairie Grasslands Region)*
- *Lead Partner: Lower Platte North Natural Resources District*
- *Number of Initial Partners: 1*
- *Participating States: Nebraska (Lead State)*

The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District in Nebraska, with the assistance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, completed the Wahoo Creek Watershed Plan and Environmental Impact Statement under the authority of Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 83-566). The watershed plan identified seventeen projects within the basin that will reduce rural and urban flooding, reduce sedimentation and scour, stabilize stream channels, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, enhance water quality, improve economic conditions and provide recreational opportunities. Seven of these structures were completed as an environmental enhancement project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Through this project, partners will construct two (Sites 26 and 27) of the remaining ten uncompleted structures as identified in the Wahoo Creek Watershed Plan to address identified flooding and water quality concerns.

To assist with the remaining needed local share, we should also start discussing plans for applying for additional assistance from the State's Water Sustainability Fund this coming July. Because of the detail needed for preparing the Water Sustainability Fund application, the committee should discuss hiring an engineering firm to increase our chances. One firm that we currently have on contract who assisted with technical information used for the approved RCPP application is FYRA. The committee/board may decide to advertise for requests for Qualifications/Proposals from other firms, but FYRA has helped with PMRNRD successful Water Sustainability Fund application for watershed dams, so they

would definitely will be a strong candidate to assist with this task. Committee discussion is requested.

3.B.2. Wahoo Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan Phase I

We are working toward making final project payments associated with the Wahoo Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan Phase I Project and close things out by March 1, 2017.

3.B.3. Wahoo Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan Phase II

Mountford continues to work with NDEQ on completing a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) for Wahoo Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan Phase II. We have \$106,000 approved from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and are working to increase our initial \$168,215 grant approval from NDEQ to \$265,950. Our plan is to use a large portion of these funds to help build three multi-purpose road dams in the Wahoo Creek Watershed. One of the many benefits of these dams will be flood reduction. Other grant and EQIP funds will be used to help complete landowner conservation practices during this project phase.

4. LOWER PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

4.A. LPRCA Monthly Report

As was mentioned earlier, a planning meeting has been scheduled at the Army National Guard Camp at Ashland on February 24, 2017, with Board members from LPNNRD, LPSNRD and PMRNRD to discuss the future of the LPRCA. We are presently a non-dues paying member, but involved with a few prior commitments. More details will be forthcoming. As previously discussed, one of biggest topics for continuing with the Alliance is the opportunity with the upcoming Army Corp's of Engineers Lower Platte River new Watershed Restoration Authority. This authority may lead to new federal funding opportunities for various projects in the Lower Platte River Watershed.

As was approved by our Board on December 12, we are also participating with LPSNRD and PMRNRD on completing the LPRCA Water Quality Plan. When completed, this plan will cover most of our NRD that falls out of the Wahoo Creek and Shell Creek Watershed Water Quality Plans. This will increase the area in our district that will receive outside funding opportunities from federal and state sources for various projects.

Also attached our project close-out/completion letters from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for two projects (Pier Removal near Two Rivers and the Spatial and Temporal Dynamics of Sandbars). While LPNNRD was an equal partner with PMRNRD and LPSNRD for the pier removal near Two Rivers State Park, we did not contribute funds or support the completed sandbar study.

5. OTHER

5.A. Army COE 205 Projects

5.A.1. Fremont 205

The Non-Federal Partners met with FYRA Engineering on December 15 in Fremont. FYRA has performed a "Platte River Hydrology & Flood Frequency Analysis Report for the Federal Levee System". This analysis was done for the Papio-Missouri NRD on the federal levee systems along the Missouri & Platte Rivers at the confluence. Using the Louisville gage analysis they have found that there is a significant reduction in flows of roughly 48,000 cfs pertaining to flood frequency. This review was accepted by the Corp and FYRA is now working with FEMA. If this reduction is so on the lower portion of the Platte River, it may very well pertain to the Platte River up to Columbus and would affect the Fremont GI Study and how that levee system is designed.

The Non-Federal Partners would like FYRA Engineering to do an analysis on the Platte River at Fremont. This would be done in a two-step approach; first they will do a data/report review, model and gage analysis to see if the Corps numbers are correct. This would take 3-4 days, estimated at 32 hours at \$125/hr = \$4,000. If the Corps number is wrong, it would take another 3-4 days to calculate new numbers, an additional \$4,000, to determine new cfs discharges. These study cost would be shared by the Non-Federal Partners. The O,E & RW Committee passed a recommendation for moving forward with this study. It was reported that FYRA has already looked into this matter far enough to confirm that this error by the Army Corps is substantiated.

The Projects Committee directed staff to work with our hired lobbyist, Water Strategies, on a letter to our congressional representatives expressing our concern and disappointment about all the elevated flood insurance premiums and project study costs that have been paid by property owners and local entities over the years as a result of this error.

5.A.2. Schuyler 205

Bob Heimann participated in a conference call with the COE on December 9th where several topics were discussed. A meeting with Lumir Jedlicka is being planned for sometime next month to inspect his concerns with one of the levee access ramps to his property and to look at improving drainage along the levee.

Schuyler's ditch cleaning project with the Army COE is moving forward as a bid was awarded for \$82,810. This project includes sediment removal, grading, shaping, and seeding of the south drainage ditch of Highway 30 eastward.

The COE has now targeted completing the Operation and Maintenance Manual for the Shell Creek levee in February 2017.

5.B. Review of Projects Financial Statement

6. WESTERN SARPY/CLEAR CREEK LEVEE REPORT

6.A. Papio Project Payment Request

PMRNRD has made their annual \$150,000 payment request for LPNNRD's portion of the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Project which was completed earlier this year. We presently owe PMRNRD \$432,490.94.

We have usually waited to make this payment at our May or June Board meeting, after collecting our May county tax receipts. The committee is asked to decide whether to pay now or at a later time as has been done in the past.

7. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Projects Committee adjourned at 9:40 a.m.