

Operations Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 31, 2023 8:30 AM
Lower Platte North NRD Office
P.O. Box 126
Wahoo, NE 68066

1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
There is no unfinished business.
2. WILD NE AND OTHER PROGRAMS
As mentioned at the previous meeting, we received survey information from Ducks Unlimited. After reviews from both the NRD and Game & Parks, we don't believe we are getting the depth of 18" as originally mentioned. The depth of 18" (of water) may assure that there isn't cattail growth. The entire area is approximately 16 acres; 4-5 acres would be excavated to 18". DU has been contacted via email by Scott Luedtke and Heimann for an updated design, budget and timeline. We haven't had a response. Saunders Co. Highway has also been contacted in regard to using spoil material to fill the road ditch in this area. The ditch does not convey water and utility power poles stand in water. This request should be taken to the Saunders Co. Supervisors.
3. OPERATION & MAINTENANCE & OTHER ITEMS
The O & M crew has mowed at Czechland and Homestead Lakes, Cotterell and Ames Levees and Rawhide Ditches. We are now on the Clear Creek Levee. We have also mowed behind the Wanahoo dam where the construction zones were.
 - 3.A. Rehabilitation of Cottonwood 21-A, NRCS & HDR
A kick-off meeting was held on August 17th with HDR, NRCS and NRD staff. The meeting went very well and the minutes were just emailed this week. Heimann has forwarded names of landowners in and below the watershed, sent the original easements and located two potential sites for a public meeting. A public meeting will be held in October. HDR has developed a draft Public Participation Plan for a scoping meeting.
Lacey will work with HDR in regards to keeping Cottonwood 21-A project information on our website.
 - 3.B. No Till Grass Drill Revenue
We received a check for \$1,023.70 from Schuyler Coop for grass drill rental for the first half of 2023. Seven cooperators used the drill.
4. ROCK AND JETTY
Nothing to report.
5. LAKE WANAHOO
 - 5.A. Lake Wanahoo Permit Sales
For the month of July, the District received \$6,055.00 in annual park permit revenue. The year by year break down of annual permit sales is listed below.

Month	Monthly Total	YTD
July 2023	\$6055.00	\$67690.00
July 2022	\$6292.50	\$68865.00
July 2021	\$6430.00	\$79592.50
July 2020	\$7332.50	\$87472.50
July 2019	\$7925.00	\$75310.00

5.B. Lake Wanahoo Camping Revenue

For the month of July, the District received \$21,176.94 in camping revenue. The year by year comparison is listed below.

Month	Month Total	YTD
July 2023	\$21176.94	\$83169.40
July 2022	\$18175.50	\$78417.83
July 2021	\$15326.94	\$82512.73
July 2020	\$12615.36	\$87645.40
July 2019	\$18046.00	\$60916.46

5.C. Clint Johannes Education Building

The Clint Johannes Education Building was rented 18 times with 2 NRD events. Revenue for the month of August was \$1,090.

6. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

6.A. Information

6.A.1. Radio & Digital Ads

August's KTIC radio ad featured the upcoming variance deadlines. September will feature the availability of environmental education programs

August's Wahoo newspaper ad featured the upcoming variance deadlines. September will also feature the environmental education programs.

The ads are attached.

6.A.2. Analytics

The LPNNRD Facebook/Twitter pages, and the website are some of the fastest ways to get information out to the public. Tracking analytics are a way to see how many people are seeing the information. Sometimes a decrease in reach or impressions can mean there is an error with the Facebook/Twitter pages or the website. Facebook and Twitter posts range from 10 - 15 posts per month. If you are on Facebook or Twitter, please like, follow, share, or retweet the Lower Platte North NRD posts!

Total reach/impressions show how many people saw the post/tweet. Engagements include likes, comments, shares/retweets and link clicks.

FACEBO OK	Total Reach	Engagements	Followers

August 1-29	5,101	550	1,489
July 2023	9260	428	1,481
June 2023	7,626	1,252	1,474

TWITTER	Total impressions	Engagements	Followers
August 1-29	3,292	123	405
July 2023	2,072	99	404
June 2023	1,111	56	400

Top Posts on Facebook and Twitter:

- Sentinel Fertigation demo flyer
- Environmental education opportunities flyer
- Science and Scenes event flyer
- Shell Creek students presentation photos from SWCS conference
- Director vacancy

WEBSITE	Users	Traffic Channel	Top Pages	Devices
August 1-29	2,402	Organic 63.1% Direct 30.3% Referral 4.7% Social 1.9%	Lake Wanahoo Home Czechland Lake Downloads Staff	Mobile 53.28% Desktop 45.59% Tablet 1.13%
July 2023	2,409	Organic 71.8% Direct 21.7% Referral 5.2% Social 1.3%	Lake Wanahoo Home Czechland Lake Downloads Outdoor Recreation	Mobile 62.2% Desktop 36.2% Tablet 1.5%
June 2023	2,523	Organic 72.7% Direct 20.8% Referral 5.4% Social 1%	Lake Wanahoo Home Czechland Lake Outdoor Recreation Downloads	Mobile 65.2% Desktop 33.1% Tablet 1.7%

Traffic channels: organic traffic means they use a search engine then choose an option

that includes lpnnrd.org, direct traffic means they type in lpnnrd.org directly (or have it bookmarked), and referral traffic is any other traffic not from a search engine or social (such as a link from another site).

Top referral clicks from: visitnebraska.com 25, onlyinyourstate.com 23, nrdnget.org 17, Wahoo newspaper website (our digital ad) 2

Clicks from Facebook: 39.

Clicks from Twitter: 0.

6.A.3. Long Range Plan

Attached is the most recent copy of the Long Range Plan. Once the levy information is approved, and there are no additional changes to the plan, we will need to have this approved and sent per Nebraska State Statute 2-3277.

6.A.4. KZ100 Advertising

Recently had discussions with Alpha Media, particularly for KZ100 station. They have proposed doing a "Take Care Tuesday" campaign that will include 4 weather and news sponsorships each Tuesday. 4 sponsorships per week at \$300 per month = \$3,600 for the fiscal year. We also have the option to do this for 2-3 months if we wanted to try it (\$600 - \$900). Scripts and production of the radio commercial are at no additional charge. Several commercials would be developed, branding the day as "Take Care Tuesday". Each would highlight one theme or project of the NRD. Commercials would rotate evenly throughout the schedule and could be replaced or updated seasonally as needed.

This company also covers KFOR, The Eagle, 106.3 KFRX, 104-1 The Blaze, ESPN 101.5 FM, KX 96.9.

Coverage Map for KZ100 is attached.

6.A.5. Nebraska Public Media

Currently looking into options for advertising with Nebraska Public Media as requested. For television, the minimum buy-in is \$1,500. The price per spot (\$30 - \$60) varies on the time of day and what programming is offered at that time. Production costs for a 30-second video are covered with the \$1,500 buy-in. They also have the option to submit a video already produced to review and see if it fits their guidelines, but not all of our currently produced commercials are 30-seconds.

Attached is the coverage map, and pricing for the Television Rate Schedule, High School Sports Packages (\$1,000 - \$4,000) and Backyard Farmer Sponsorship (\$5,000).

6.B. Education

6.B.1. Past Events

- **August 17th**: Coffee Lakeside: Screentime. Three people attended this event.
- **August 23rd**: Science and Scenes with Alissa Hansen. We capped the class at 15 spots, but ended up adding a few extra people who wanted to participate.

- **August 29th:** State Fair education day from 9-12. Over 200 kids came through, where we talked about NRD's, watersheds, rainfall, and used the interactive elevation map in the Raising Nebraska Building.
- **August 21st - 25th:** CEO Student, Cort, started with the NRD. He will be with every department throughout the semester and then will spend time with departments he connected most with.

6.B.2. Future Events

September 14th: Coffee Lakeside

September 15th: Papio NRD Field Trip assistance

September 19th: Envirothon Field Day

September 20th: Moving with Nature - Let's Play Yoga Event

September 21st: Fremont Middle School Outdoor Day

TBD: Survival Club; St. Wenceslaus Pre-K visits; other classroom visits; Senior Citizen Center presentation; Coffee Lakeside at North Bend Library.

7. RURAL WATER SYSTEMS

On 8/14 Elliott and Chapman met with Lucas Billesbach, consultant for the Village of Prague, in regards to the Prague Public Water System. There are concerns about degraded infrastructure, well capacity and nearing MCL/AL for contaminants. The potential expansion of either the Colon or Bruno RWDs was discussed; an understanding of current capacity, operations, and potential for growth will all be factored in the alternative analysis. Other options for the Village would be: drilling a new well, treatment system upgrade, and water main replacement.

7.A. Colon System

Test results from the tri-annual Lead and Copper tests were received from the labs. No samples were at, or above, MCL/ALs. A copy of results will be sent to participating homes, and all required reporting will be submitted to NDEE.

All hydrants in the village have been exercised this year.

Routine monthly sampling completed, meters read, bills mailed 8/31.

7.B. Bruno System

Routine monthly sampling completed, meters read, bills mailed 8/31.

7.C. Other

VARIANCE REQUESTS

Variance requests for new and expanded irrigated acres in Restricted Development Areas and Non-Hydrologically Connected Areas are due by **August 15**. Hydrologically Connected Areas are due by **September 15**. For more information visit lpnnrd.org or call 402-443-4675.



LOWER PLATTE NORTH
Natural Resources District

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LOWER PLATTE NORTH
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Environmental Education Opportunities

Hands-on sessions for students
in wildlife, forestry, soil and more!

Visit lpnnrd.org/education or
call the NRD at 443-4675
for availability.



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LOWER PLATTE NORTH
Natural Resources District

LONG RANGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Fiscal Year 2024

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Introduction

The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District (LPNNRD) is one of 23 Natural Resources Districts created in 1969 with the passage of LB 1357 by the Nebraska Unicameral. Since its formation in 1972, the LPNNRD has been assisting people in the Lower Platte River Basin in the development and protection of our soil and water resources. Nebraska Statutes require that Natural Resources Districts develop a Long Range Implementation Plan. The purpose of this plan is to summarize accomplishments during fiscal year 2022 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) and planned District activities for fiscal year 2023. There are also objectives for a five-year period from fiscal years 2024 to 2028. The plan serves as an implementation tool of the district’s Master Plan, which is updated every ten years.

This Long Range Implementation Plan was approved by the LPNNRD Board of Directors on September 11, 2023.

Authority and Responsibilities

The Natural Resources Districts have been given statutory responsibility outlined in Sections 2-3229, R.R.S. 1943. In this section it states that “The purposes of the Natural Resources Districts shall be to develop and execute, through the exercise of powers and authorities contained in this act, plans, facilities, works and programs relating to: (1) erosion prevention and control, (2) prevention of damages from flood water and sediment, (3) flood prevention and control, (4) soil conservation, (5) water supply for any beneficial uses, (6) development, management, utilization, and conservation of groundwater and surface water, (7) pollution control, (8) solid waste disposal and sanitary drainage, (9) drainage improvement and channel rectification, (10) development and management of fish and wildlife habitat, (11)

development and management of recreational and park facilities, and (12) forestry and range management.”

Lower Platte North NRD programs and projects are available to meet the goal of properly developing our water and related land resources.

Description of the District

The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District is located in the Lower Platte River Basin in eastern Nebraska and includes 1,031,000 acres of land. A portion of Saunders, Butler, Platte, Dodge, Colfax, Boone, and Madison Counties are within the district (see Appendix A), which includes twenty-eight cities, towns, and villages. Besides the Platte River, other notable tributaries in the district include: Bone Creek, Clear Creek, Duck Creek, Elm Creek, Loseke Creek, Rawhide Creek, Sand Creek, Shell Creek, Silver Creek, Skull Creek, Taylor Creek, and Wahoo Creek.

The population of the district is approximately 65,000, of which about half is rural and half urban. The Lower Platte North NRD is financed by a tax levy which may be up to four and one-half cents per \$100 valuation for general purposes and another one cent for water programs. The FY 2024 tax levy is 0.028652 cents per \$100 valuation.

Governing Body

The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District (LPNNRD) is governed by a 19-member Board of Directors. The directors are elected at the general election for a term of four years, with half of the members up for election every two years.

The district is divided into nine (9) subdistricts. Two board members are elected from each of the nine subdistricts, and one board member is elected at large every four years.



The district operates by a set of bylaws which are kept on file at the district headquarters at Wahoo, Nebraska.

FY 2023 Platte River Basin Activities

One of the great natural resources of Nebraska is the Platte River. It is the feature that attracted early settlers to our state and guided the wagon trails. Today, we look at the Platte River differently. It is a water source for agriculture and cities like Fremont, Lincoln, and Omaha, a haven for wildlife, and a place for recreation. Issues surrounding the Platte are a top priority at the LPNNRD, since approximately 72 miles of the river flow directly through, or border, the district.

Ice Jam Agreement

In 1994, the LPNNRD entered into an agreement with the Papio-Missouri River NRD, Lower Platte South NRD, and Cass, Douglas, Sarpy and Saunders Counties to more effectively deal with ice jams and their resulting flood damages along the Lower Platte River. This area of concern is primarily from Fremont, Nebraska to the mouth of the Platte River. This group has pooled funds of \$150,000 to retain a contractor to use explosives when needed, to remove ice jams in a timely manner.

During the winter of 2022-2023, there were no ice issues of concern on the lower Platte River.

Rock & Jetty Program

This program was developed to offer cost-share assistance to landowners to construct erosion control devices for stream bank stabilization and to assist Dike and Drainage Districts with maintenance of dikes along the Platte and Elkhorn rivers and perennial streams. In FY22, \$20,000 is budgeted for projects on rivers & streams. We assisted two landowners on maintenance projects in FY 22-23 at a cost of \$5,427.

FY 2024 Platte River Basin Objectives

- Administer \$20,000 in the Rock & Jetty Program to assist with priority stream bank stabilization for cooperators on the Platte and Elkhorn Rivers and Perennial streams. This includes assisting cooperators with meeting the regulations of the Clean Water Act through section 404 permits.
- As a member of the Joint Water Management Advisory Board, provide leadership and assistance to move forward with exploring flood reduction solutions within Dodge County.
- Support the Lower Platte Weed Management Area financially and technically in controlling noxious and invasive weeds.
- Support the Nebraska Land Trust in acquiring easements for the protection and preservation of quality lands.
- Support the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance by becoming an active voting member.

FY 2025-2029 Long Range Platte River Basin Objectives

- Continue to budget cost-share funds for priority bank stabilization along the Platte and Elkhorn rivers and other perennial streams in the district.
- Continue to be an active member on the Joint Water Management Advisory Board.
- Promote riparian buffer zones along the Platte River and other perennial streams.
- Continue to explore new, innovative and cost-effective ways to protect against stream bank erosion.
- Provide education on stream bank protection and regulations.
- Support and budget annually, as needed, for the Ice Jam Agreement Fund.
- Keep up to date on Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act regulations.

- Continue to participate with the City of Fremont and Dodge County to study potential nonstructural measures to reduce flooding and economic losses from the Lower Platte River.
- Work with the City of Schuyler as they evaluate the need for future federal funding for completing structural and non-structural approaches to reduce flooding and economic losses from the Platte River through the LPNNRD District-Wide Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Encourage cities and counties to initiate floodplain management planning to promote wise floodplain development.
- Assist dike and drainage districts within the LPNNRD to properly repair and maintain levy projects.
- Budget annually as needed to support the Lower Platte Weed Management group in controlling noxious weeds.
- Continue to support the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance as an active voting member.



One of the Lower Platte North NRD's major responsibilities is to conserve and protect our ground and surface water resources. To accomplish this goal, the Lower Platte North continues to participate in water quality studies, ground water level monitoring, and water resource educational activities.

FY 2023 Ground & Surface Water Activities

Ground Water Management Area

LPNNRD implemented a District-wide Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) on January 1, 1997, to address both water quality and quantity concerns. This action was based on data gathered since 1985 indicating where groundwater quality conditions have deteriorated beyond those established as health standards, such as nitrate nitrogen. On that date, groundwater quality Phase I (education) regulations became effective for the entire District.

One primary rule in Phase I requires certification for fertilizer and water use. The District has developed a groundwater program emphasizing a protection-based approach rather than a reactive, corrective approach. Since that time, advanced Phase areas have been determined by trigger levels listed in the rules and regulations of the GWMA. The District has two Phase groundwater quality control areas, those being Bellwood and Richland/Schuyler. The Bellwood Phase 2 Area was established in 2003 and presently covers approximately 30 square miles in the western portion of the Platte Valley in Butler County and includes the town of Bellwood. In 2015 nitrate levels decreased to a point that the trigger levels were not being achieved, so this area was decreased to 20 square miles. The Richland/Schuyler Phase 2 Area was established in 2004. In 2015 this area was raised to Phase 3 because of the rising nitrate levels. This area covers approximately

55 square miles in the Platte Valley of Colfax County and includes the towns of Richland and Schuyler. In 2015, 10 additional sections north of the Richland/Schuyler Area became a Phase 2 area and in 2020 raised to Phase 3. Elevated nitrate-nitrogen levels continue to be the major concern in both Phase areas. Emphasis on awareness is a priority to the District with numerous grants being considered. A grant was received from the Water Sustainability Fund in November 2022. This grant will conduct a geological assessment to go with the AEM flights along with offering cost-share for best management practices in the Schuyler - Richland Phase Area. In July 2023 a WSF grant was approved to determine nitrate legacy from Richland to Fremont.

In June 2018, the District updated its Groundwater Rules and Regulations by adding a Phase Four under Water Quality and managing water by consumptive use or acre feet limitations. As of July 1, 2023, the District had 9424 registered active wells with 4606 irrigation wells and 212 wells in the GWEL network.

In Summer of 2012, the District saw mid-summer declines in the Bruno area and the uplands of Platte and Colfax Counties. These are now designated as the Butler-Saunders and Platte-Colfax Special Quantity Subareas. The District mandated water flow meters, rolling allocations and annual reports in these areas starting in 2016.

In 2012 seven NRD's agreed to develop a Lower Platte Basin plan, which is a cooperative agreement for the Basin Plan. This plan was approved in December of 2017 with each district assigned a depletion allotment within the Basin. The allotment is in 5-year increments starting in 2016 with a formula to determine the acre feet used for new water uses. The District completed its V-IMP in June of 2018 by adding an additional rule of requiring municipalities to report yearly water use, with an annual report

due to NeDNR. The Coalition contracted with the Flatwater Group to analyze the data that will be used in the next 5-year allotment. The group updated the plan for next 5-years in 2022 with new allotments until 2027.

In 2016 the Lower Platte River Consortium, made up of the Lower Platte South NRD, the Lower Platte North NRD, the Papio-Missouri River NRD, Lincoln Water System (LWS), Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD), and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR), embarked on an effort to develop a drought contingency plan to maintain/mitigate sustainable water supplies to the Lower Platte River during drought conditions. The final report was finalized in the Spring of 2020. The group has discussed the projects to be considered for supplying water into the Platte River and will be making 5-year updates.

Current rules and regulations of the GWMA are available at the LPNNRD headquarters in Wahoo and via the district website at www.lpnrd.org.

Ground Water Quality Sampling

The Lower Platte North NRD continues efforts to develop a ground water quality inventory. The District has been divided into four primary aquifer regions: Todd Valley, Platte Valley, Shell Creek and the Uplands, and further divided into 26 subareas. Staff samples the same wells each summer, weather permitting, to determine long term trends for nitrate-nitrogen. This is referred to as the Statewide Network. The data collected is provided to the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE). NDEE in turn provides this to the Nebraska Legislature on an annual basis.

In 2022 samples were collected from 52 sites.

Year	Nitrate-Nitrogen Range	% Nitrate-nitrogen 0-8.0 ppm	% Nitrate nitrogen 8.01-10.0 ppm	% Nitrate nitrogen > 10 ppm
2022	0 - 18.7 ppm	69% (36 of 52)	15% (8 of 52)	15% (8 of 52)

Samples for pesticide analysis were collected from ten of these sites (19%). The pesticide analysis was for a suite of 25 parameters, and all results were less than reporting level.

Ground Water Energy Level Monitoring Network

One of the responsibilities of the NRDs in the State is to monitor fluctuations in groundwater levels. With the help of area cooperators, a ground water energy level monitoring network has been established in the LPNNRD. This monitoring network has been established to obtain a better understanding of the groundwater levels throughout the District. As of Spring 2023, the LPNNRD had 212 wells in the groundwater energy level monitoring network. These wells are monitored each spring and fall, with selected wells also measured in late August.

The LPNNRD compares the latest spring reading to the 1987 base-year to determine if a subarea needs to be declared a Level 2 or Level 3 groundwater management area. Level 2 and 3 management areas require flow meters on wells, annual reporting of water use, and establishment of acre-inch allocations. For the 26 sub-areas within the District, 24 subareas are currently at Level 1 management, while the other 2 sub-areas still need additional information before these can be designated. Sub-Areas along the Elkhorn and Platte Rivers are showing some of the wells reaching Level 2 and 3 management. The District prefers at least three years of data before the subarea can be designated as a Level 1, 2, or 3 management area.

Fall readings in 2022 and Spring of 2023 showed a decline from the previous year's measurement. This change was the continuing lack of moisture in the last 2 years. Spring readings in 2023 showed 92% of the wells measured had levels lower in Spring 2023 compared to Spring of 2022. There was a 3% rise in 6 wells from a year ago.

Chemigation

Chemigation is the act of injecting chemicals into the water line of an irrigation system that is then applied onto the crops. It is considered to be one of the most efficient ways of applying essential nutrients in times when the crop is uptaking the most amount of nitrogen through its growing stages. In order to chemigate, a licensed permit holder must obtain a permit through the Lower Platte North NRD. Special equipment must be installed to protect Nebraska's groundwater from possible back-flow of chemicals into the groundwater source. To obtain this permit administered by NDEE, you must pass the Chemigation Certification test taught through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's certification program. There is an online test option available to producers. The chemigation equipment must be properly equipped, inspected and approved by the NRD before applying any chemicals. The number of chemigation permits continues to slowly rise throughout the district due to chemigation's efficient application rate when the crops are in the most need of nutrients. In sandier soil types, chemigation is extremely effective due to the soil's incapability to hold essential nutrients in the root zone after heavy rainfall events.

Chemigation Permits	Total	Renewal	New	Emergency
November 2022	733	676	56	1
August 2023	704	643	61	0

In 2014, the Legislature approved changes to Title 195 that would allow individual NRDs to set chemigation fees. Chemigation fees for LPNNRD are as follows: \$90 for a New permit, \$30 for a Renewal permit, and \$300 for an Emergency permit. Inspections are required on equipment for new permits. Renewal permits are inspected on a three-year rotation. Failure to renew by June 1st of the following year the permit was obtained will cause the permit to lapse. If a renewal

permit lapses, the producer must obtain a new permit and an inspection is required.

Decommissioned (Abandoned) Wells

Abandoned wells are a health and safety concern and have been ruled as illegal by the Nebraska Legislature. A well not used for three consecutive years or one which is no longer useful is considered to be abandoned and needs to be properly decommissioned.

The Lower Platte North NRD offers up to 75% cost share assistance to landowners to properly decommission abandoned water wells. In addition, the district will assist with up to 75% of the cost for pump and obstruction removal on domestic and stock wells. To receive cost share assistance, the actual decommissioning must be performed by a certified well driller or pump installer. The landowner has six months from the time of application to accomplish this task unless good cause is shown.

Since 1992 the district has administered local and state cost-share dollars to decommission 734 wells. Through this program in FY 22-23, a total of \$11,604.58 was administered by LPNNRD for the plugging of 10 wells. The district will administer approximately \$15,500 of state and local funds to plug additional wells during the current fiscal year.

Flow Meter Maintenance Program/Flow Meter Readings

Since 2008, the LPNNRD has implemented the requirement of installing a District approved flow meter on any new or replacement well. Thereafter in 2012, the District also required the installation of a flow meter on any expansion of acres from an existing well. This pumping information is invaluable to the District to know what has been pumped during years of extended drought. It is vital that the LPNNRD keeps track of this going forward into the future. In order to know the volume of water within our aquifer systems, we need to know the water that is being extracted.

In 2016, the district chose to contract with a

private company through the bidding process. The company was scheduled to maintain the flow meters within the LPNNRD’s SQS areas for the first four years. Since that was completed the District has chosen to open the flow meter maintenance program district wide in 2020. Maintenance on the flow meters will be performed once every four years. The district is in charge of the labor and site visit at each meter. Each mechanical meter site visit is \$60 and each battery operated site visit is \$75. This maintenance includes the regular greasing of the mechanical meters and changing the batteries on the digitally read meters. Along with the regular maintenance the private company also ensures that the meter is not damaged from water or vibration. There are approximately 1,150 irrigation well flow meters that are getting routine maintenance once every four years.

Along with the irrigation wells, the LPNNRD also records meter readings from all of the municipality wells within the District including MUD, Lincoln and Fremont. Livestock wells and commercial wells are required to report if the well was drilled after the 2012 requirement date. Over 1,200 readings are recorded annually throughout the LPNNRD District. This Fiscal year the LPNNRD budgeted \$24,000 for the meter maintenance program.

Registered Wells

The Nebraska Legislature declared that the conservation and the beneficial use of ground water are essential to the future well-being of the State. State Law requires that all water wells in the State of Nebraska be registered with the Department of Natural Resources. Wells that are not registered are illegal and should be registered as soon as possible. A breakdown by decade from 1970 to present shows the growth of active irrigation wells in the District.

Table of Active Irrigation Wells within LPNNRD compiled by Completion Date

Date	Number of Active Irrigation Wells in the District
December 31, 1970	1,428
December 31, 1980	2,756
December 31, 1990	3,241
December 31, 2000	3,686
December 31, 2010	4,307
December 31, 2020	4,554
July 1, 2023	4,606

Well Permits

In May of 2008, the LPNNRD placed a flow meter and water reporting condition on well permits for all permits issued after that date. All well permits require well owners to install a flow meter and report their water use for the calendar year to the LPNNRD by December 15 of each year. This reporting requirement is effective the year the well is drilled and for each year thereafter, until the well is decommissioned. From January 1 to July 1st, 2023, the District has issued 26 well permits with 8 new and 18 replacement irrigation wells.

Special Studies

The LPNNRD has done a number of studies within the District. The following is a list of studies that are currently being conducted within the District.

Aquifer Vulnerability Mapping and Analysis

The Lower Platte North has been working with UNL to collect and analyze data within the LPN Water Quality Management Areas. The first stage involved intensive water sampling of irrigation wells for nitrates. A few isotope nitrate samples were collected for the purpose of determining if the nitrates are from organic or inorganic sources. This was followed-up with vadose soil sampling analysis to assist in determining the amount of nitrates in soil and pore water present in the unsaturated zones above the water table. A nitrate tool was developed utilizing this data, along with

geological information to assist in determining vulnerability. This project was completed in 2021 with informational meetings in the area. The plan is to conduct some age dating of groundwater to help in nitrogen management.

3D Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Hydrogeologic Framework and Assessment

Papio-Missouri River NRD, NeDNR and LPNNRD started a study in January 2021 to assess AEM survey information, well logs, and other geological information. The data will be used to characterize different geological layers and assign variables such as hydraulic conductivity. This data will be used in groundwater modeling to better understand, assess, and forecast groundwater. This study was completed in January 2022. Starting August 2023 the process of taking this data along with LPSNRD assessment and completing a groundwater model for the Lower Platte River Basin.

Lower Platte River Consortium Study

Municipal wellfields in the Lower Platte River Basin depend on the Platte River to recharge groundwater for their use. This study looked at long term water supplies in the Lower Platte River Basin, and the ability to enhance streamflow, especially in drought conditions, to sustain these municipal water systems. Sustaining water in the river would also provide a benefit to wildlife and agriculture by lessening the likelihood of a 'call' on the river. Due to different hydrologic conditions in the Platte River, such as gaining and losing segments, siting of future reservoirs, groundwater storage projects, etc. becomes important in order to most effectively move water to a desired location downstream. The plan was completed in Spring 2020 with the group now in the process considering the options from the plan to determine the feasibility of the projects.

Eastern Nebraska Water Resources Assessment

LPNNRD is a partner in the Eastern Nebraska Water Resources Assessment (ENWRA). The ENWRA study has been utilizing Airborne

Electromagnetic (AEM) over eastern Nebraska to better model the geology of the glaciated portion of the State. It has opened several questions concerning bedrock aquifers both in water quantity and water quality such as salinity. New flights were conducted in the summer of 2018 with the final report received in summer 2019. A study is being conducted in the Platte-Colfax Area (SQS#2) utilizing the AEM, additional data loggers and other geologic logs to determine the relationship between confining and unconfined layers along with determining drawdown levels for management decisions. The flights and the results can be found on the ENWRA website at (www.enwra.org).

Elkhorn-Loup Model

The Elkhorn-Loup Model (ELM) project is a study of surface water and groundwater resources in the Elkhorn River basin upstream of Norfolk, Nebraska and the Loup River basin upstream of Columbus, Nebraska. Parts of this basin overlap and cover portions of upper Shell Creek.

Certifying Acres

In July 2009, the District signed a contract with gWorks (formerly GIS Workshop) to develop a database of county assessor records as the preliminary step to certifying irrigated acres. Using these records, LPNNRD staff mailed out letters to landowners to verify irrigated ground. As of January 2022, the majority of the irrigation in the district has been cataloged. The District is still granting new irrigation development. Those new acres are not entered into the certification database until they can be verified by aerial photography and accurately modeled. In March of 2021, the District went through all the approved new irrigation acres and modeled out all those that had yet to be counted. Acre certification provides an inventory of the irrigation needs of the District, which is an important part of present and future groundwater management and planning. In addition to cataloging irrigated acres, LPNNRD

staff have been actively working with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR), as well as local landowners, to bring all irrigation wells in LPNNRD into compliance with Nebraska Revised Statute 46-602 (7).

Nebraska Ordnance Plant Water Pollution Clean Up at Mead

During the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, an Army Ordnance Plant near Mead was used to assemble bombs and served as an early Atlas Missile ICBM site. Over time, the soil and groundwater at the plant site became polluted with various explosive residues and solvents. The cleanup has been divided into three basic project areas: Soils (OU1), Ground Water (OU2), and Building contamination (OU3). This area has been under study by the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) since 1988. An open house was held by the Corp, May 2023, with annual tours and open houses conducted regularly.

Wellhead Protection Program

The LPNNRD implemented a wellhead protection program in FY 2001. The goal of the program is to minimize potential polluting activities on the land surrounding a community's public water supply well(s). The District has identified 22 communities with public supply wells and they have been encouraged to become involved in the program. The Communities of Newman Grove and Platte Center have applied for Source Water Protection Grants to re-evaluate and approve their wellhead management areas. Both communities will do a nitrogen assessment for the area to assist in future well locations.

Rural Water Districts

In recent years, the District has worked with communities who have had difficulties with water quality and quantity by forming two rural water systems. The Butler County system linked the village of Bruno in 2006, who was having water quality and quantity problems, to David City. Also in 2006, the Saunders County system linked the village of Colon, who was

experiencing water quality concerns, to Wahoo. The LPNNRD operates both of these systems. The District purchases water from the larger communities and delivers it to the smaller communities; RW staff manage and maintain Colon's system and billing while Bruno manages their infrastructure and household billing. Both systems are designed to serve rural customers along each service route. Combined, the two systems serve over 135 households in Saunders and Butler Counties. To address fiscal concerns both RWDs have implemented a phased rate increase strategy to more diligently manage the financial standings of both districts. The District has been in contact with several other communities and anticipates several more communities and rural customers to be serviced by rural water systems in the future as rural communities face an increased burden at providing adequate quantity, and quality, water while maintaining aging infrastructure. Both systems are greater than 10 years old and repairs/replacements of meters is expected to take up RWD staff's time in 2023-24 as a number of meters and components are nearing the end of their expected service life.

Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS)

LPNNRD has used Geographic Information System (GIS) technology since 1996. GIS is an automated system combining database information and maps. Features on a map, created with GIS technology, contain attribute or feature descriptions that are referenced by location. The data used by a GIS system consists of Vector and Raster Data. Vector data consists of point (wells), line (roads) and polygon data (irrigation boundaries or parcels); with Raster data consisting of pixels, where each pixel on the screen corresponds to a data point. Raster data includes aerial photography and elevation data such as LiDAR (a highly accurate elevation dataset). The District has incorporated the use of GIS into most district functions, including the certification of irrigated acres, maintenance, project planning, modeling of groundwater

availability, and the movement of contaminants such as nitrates through the soil profile.

In addition to in-house GIS activities, LPNNRD GIS staff assist a variety of partners, including projecting FSA aerial photography into Nebraska State Plane Feet coordinates for NeDNR, custom authoring of maps for the Nebraska Land Trust, coordination of helicopter flight lines for invasive species control with the Lower Platte Weed Management Area, and helping other NRDs with GIS questions as they emerge.

LPNNRD entered into an agreement with Phoenix Web Group to create a robust, relational database. GIS will be the backbone of this database and will allow LPNNRD to quickly, and efficiently, look up any information pertaining to any project or cost share that has been completed for any constituent with land in LPNNRD.

The Global Positioning System (GPS) relies on 31 NAVSTAR satellites, which provide world wide positioning and navigation information around the clock. Receivers acquire signals from satellites to determine precise locations on earth. The data obtained from taking GPS positions can be downloaded and mapped with GIS, making the two technologies complementary. LPNNRD partnered with NRCS on the purchase of a sub-centimeter GPS base station. This allows NRCS and NRD staff to quickly and efficiently perform a variety of tasks in the field with survey level precision.

As drone technology continues to evolve, LPNNRD has added a SkyDio2 Autonomous Drone to its inventory. LPNNRD Staff have completed FAA Part 107 certification, which ensures safe operation of drones for commercial purposes. This certification process involves an exam that covers airspace regulations, weather, and aviation safety.

FY 2024 Ground and Surface Water Objectives

- Continue to monitor changes in groundwater levels and quality in the district.
- Continue with LPNNRD Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) programs to help avoid the Lower Platte Basin being designated “fully appropriated.”
- Continue to implement Voluntary Integrated Water Management Plan (V-IMP) for the District and basin-wide plan. Utilize acre feet allotments assigned to the District for the benefit of the basin.
- As part of the GWMA, continue with LPNNRD certification classes, demonstration plots, generation of maps indicating problem areas, and evolving the development of a master database.
- Continue to cooperate with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in monitoring groundwater levels at two sites.
- Continue to cooperate with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in monitoring surface water levels at four sites and one site for contamination evaluation.
- Use the Subarea Delineation Study to identify ‘small pocket aquifers’ in the Swedeburg, Prague, Yutan, and Yutan South subareas. Review other aquifer subareas to determine if Stay Management Areas are justified in other portions of our District.
- Continue sampling of approximately 53 wells in our District that are part of the Nebraska State-wide Network.
- Continue to monitor the Phase Areas in Richland-Schuyler and Bellwood for nitrate and elevate these areas as needed.
- Continue implementing extensive sampling of soil and water in the Phase Areas for the purpose of identifying workable best management practices for curbing the rising nitrate trend.
- Implement best management practices within the Phase Areas for the purpose of decreasing nitrate levels.
- Administer \$19,000 of state and local cost-

share funds to decommission abandoned water wells, and provide 100% cost-share assistance within Wellhead Protection Areas to communities that are actively doing projects within its management area.

- Maintain a multi-agency groundwater energy level monitoring network in the Wann Basin of the Platte Valley north of Ashland to pool information from different agencies collecting water level data. This information is being used by the COE and MUD to refine their groundwater modeling efforts.
- Continue to implement the Chemigation Program to inspect safety equipment on permitted irrigation systems in the district.
- Continue with the District's Well Permitting Program and Variance Process throughout the District.
- Continue to review water use reports submitted to the LPNNRD as part of the well permitting process from new and replacement wells.
- Provide information and education on water conservation and safe disposal of farm and household chemicals.
- Continue to map registered and unregistered wells in the district using GPS.
- Promote and sponsor LPNNRD's Spring Conservation Sensation.
- Provide information on Integrated Pest Management in news releases and the "Viaduct" newsletter to encourage reduced use of pesticides.
- Support and promote urban water conservation and chemical disposal throughout the District.
- Assist in organizing the annual NRD Water Programs Conference held each year to update the NRD's on activity of State and Federal Agencies, new research, and Legislative issues.
- Continue to install flow meters on irrigation wells that are part of our Ground Water Energy Level (GWEL) Network.
- Expand the GWEL network to monitor aquifer sub-areas as designated in the 2009

Subarea Delineation Study. This will be done by incorporating additional high capacity wells and the drilling of new monitoring wells.

- Continue to monitor clean up efforts by the COE at the Former Ordnance Plant at Mead, Nebraska.
- Work with the COE to establish spacing requirements for future high capacity irrigation, industrial, and/or municipal wells that are requesting to be installed near known contaminant plumes from the Former Ordnance Plant near Mead, so these wells will not interfere with the COE's clean up efforts.
- Continue to monitor clean up efforts by the University of Nebraska at the Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center (ENREC) facilities east of Ithaca, Nebraska.
- Maintain transducers placed in District monitoring wells to record changes in groundwater energy levels and to continue the process of installing real-time remote reads.
- Implement Level 2 or Level 3 Management areas as warranted caused by declining groundwater energy levels in 50% or more of the monitoring wells reaching their trigger levels after three consecutive spring readings.
- Review livestock permits from NDEE.
- Investigate irrigation runoff and groundwater management area complaints as needed.
- Expand the NeRain program within our District.
- Continue to be a sponsor member of the Elkhorn-Loup Model (ELM).
- Continue groundwater studies with the University and NeDNR in the SQS areas. Study will focus on confined and unconfined aquifers and drawdowns within these areas.
- Communicate with well drillers and pump installers on water concerns within the District.
- Continue to assist the Eastern Nebraska Water Resources Assessment (ENWRA) with

the use of AEM (Airborne Electromagnetic) to study the eastern glaciated portions of Nebraska to provide a geologic framework map.

- Improve irrigation efficiency by working with UNL Extension on the Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Network (NAWMN) to install Watermark sensors and ET gauges with producers each year in our District.
- Continue with the process of updating Irrigated Acre Certification within the District.
- Continue working on projects identified within the Shell Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan.
- Update water quality objectives as identified in the Wahoo Creek Watershed and the Shell Creek Watershed Water Quality Plans.
- Continue to increase producer participation in online reporting for entering their data to improve efficiency and quality of data.
- Analyze the real-time water level measurement network in Special Quantity Areas for in-season management decisions for determining warning triggers.
- Start the groundwater modeling process jointly with PMRNRD, LPSNRD and NeDNR within the Lower Platte Basin for updating the Hydrological Connected Area (HCA) and assist in the well permitting process.
- To work with USGS and Lower Loup NRD on assessing legacy nitrate in Platte, Colfax and Dodge Counties, Nebraska by identifying wells to sample.
- To continue to work with UNL and NDEE on an interseeding cover crop project in the Shell and Wahoo Creek Watersheds.

FY 2025-2029 Long Range Ground and Surface Water Objectives

- Continue groundwater quality sampling throughout the LPNNRD, both the State-wide network and intensive sampling of selected regional aquifers.
- Continue water quality education programs based on the goals and objectives of the

LPNNRD Groundwater Management Area, which includes LPNNRD certification classes for landowners, municipal, and industrial water users.

- If needed, designate further Phase II, III, and IV boundaries for the Groundwater Quality Management Areas.
- Educate the need for check valves in protecting the aquifer from contamination.
- Continue with nitrogen application demonstrations and participate with demonstrations on integrated pest management and sustainable agriculture.
- Assist in the proper decommissioning of water wells in the district.
- Continue to use GPS to map registered and unregistered wells within the district.
- If necessary, designate Level II and III boundaries within the district to manage declining groundwater levels.
- If necessary, designate new Special Quantity Subareas (SQS) within the district to manage mid summer declines of groundwater energy levels in aquifers that operate under large pressure swings.
- Continue measurement of ground water energy levels in the district.
- Develop a groundwater model to assist in management for each sub-area. Additional information on water use from all wells will be needed for accurate information.
- Continued partnership with the Eastern Nebraska Water Resources Assessment (ENWRA) and apply information to the glaciated portions of our District.
- Initiate additional studies to identify vulnerable aquifers and modify GWMA rules and regulations to protect these aquifers and their long term sustainability. Continue geophysical work, installation of monitoring wells and test holes to better define these vulnerable sub-areas. Additional AEM flights with ¼ to ⅓ mile spacing would gratefully assist in defining such areas. Eventually cover the entire District with these detailed AEM investigations.
- Continue using AEM (airborne electromagnetic) information to analyze

bedrock aquifers both in water quantity and water quality. Test holes and monitoring wells will have to be installed and sampled to determine these as a possible source of usable groundwater. New management strategies need to be developed for these aquifers such as summer trigger levels for confined bedrock aquifers, especially if these are hydrologically isolated from overlying alluvial aquifers. This could develop into three dimensional management where aquifers at different depths are treated by a separate set of rules for each one. This could become very complex but will likely be the only way to sustain the use of these aquifers far into the future.

- Install precipitation gauges near monitoring wells in important sub-areas.
- Utilize the completed Lower Platte River Consortium Study for possible locations for recharge and reservoir sites to better convey water downstream to municipal wellfields.
- Complete water quality objectives as identified in the Watershed Quality Plans.
- Continue to update the Groundwater Management Plan to include Integrated Management of surface and ground water. It may be necessary to install additional surface water gauging sites coupled with nearby groundwater monitoring wells as tools for integrated water management.
- Expand the GWEL network to have continuous recording monitoring wells in each sub-area to better manage the resource with the ability for remote real-time readings. This is especially important in confined aquifers.
- Continue to update the certification of irrigated acres.
- Continue to assist District communities who have difficulties with water quality and quantity by helping determine rural water system feasibility.
- Keep the Saunders County Rural Water System study as an alternative in the event of changing federal regulations governing municipal water supplies.

- Keep abreast of updates and new iterations of the Elkhorn-Loup Model (ELM) to determine which areas in the Shell Creek watershed are in hydrologic connection with the Elkhorn or Loup River basins.

In summary, the LPNNRD needs to focus on five areas in the next five years:

1. Using information from the AEM flights and test holes, establish a monitoring well network in these confined aquifers to record continuous ground water energy levels. It is midsummer declines (late July to mid-August) when large drops in aquifer pressure can cause some wells to run low on water. Map locations of potential recharge sites. More flights, test holes and/or monitoring wells might be necessary in areas to provide the necessary information.

2. Establish ground water management rules to better address confined aquifers. This could involve comparing spring to summer ground water energy levels and comparing this to the potentiometric aquifer thickness and the depth of bedrock. The current management rules for unconfined aquifers should be adequate for future conditions. These controls are based on three consecutive spring readings at or below their trigger levels in at least 50% of the GWEL wells in a given subarea.

3. AEM flights have given a new interest in bedrock aquifers such as the Dakota formation. Monitoring wells in selected areas are needed to determine the water quality and quantity of these bedrock aquifers. Also are these bedrock aquifers in hydrologic connection to any overlying aquifers? If this is the case and new high capacity wells are being established in these bedrock aquifers then management should shift focus to the more vulnerable aquifer to sustain long term viability of both aquifers. If these bedrock aquifers are isolated from the overlying aquifer then "three dimensional management" where wells are managed differently due to

their depth may be in order. This could get complex but management needs to take the chemical and physical characteristics of the aquifer in account. For example, what is the salinity of the groundwater and is the bedrock aquifer cemented, unconsolidated, sandstone, limestone, or shale.

4. Horizontal wells. In the immediate future horizontal high capacity irrigation water wells will likely be established in thin aquifers to increase well output or yield. On the plus side, these could replace several vertical wells that are used in series and therefore be a cost savings to the well owner. On the negative side these could quickly dry up thin aquifers less than 20 feet in thickness and affect nearby wells. How do you manage such a system? At the least you could require 600 feet spacing from any point of the lateral to a neighbor's well but again this may not provide much protection in thin aquifers such as the area immediately west of Fremont. Other management options would be to restrict the number of acres irrigated, restrict the length and direction of the laterals, restrict well output such as limit the gallons per minute, establish water allocation, install monitoring wells such as near the end of the laterals to track groundwater levels, etc.

5. Integrated Water Management. Siting of potential recharge sites, storage reservoirs (both surface and groundwater), and potential water reuse projects to enhance the water supply in the District. Additional monitoring wells, streamflow gauging, and precipitation sites will likely be necessary. Effects of climate change will also need to be considered as part of integrated water management.



In response to the Erosion and Sediment Control Act (LB 474), passed in 1986, the Natural Resources Commission developed the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Strategy. This strategy outlines a course of action for efficiently conserving and managing the state's natural resources.

The Lower Platte North NRD administers the Erosion and Sediment Act and has patterned its local program after the state strategy. The district administers state and local cost-share funds through Soil and Water Conservation Programs (SWCP) to offer incentives to producers for installation of land treatment practices. LPNNRD staff also worked with NRCS staff to utilize Farm Bill Programs to repair erosion problems.

FY 2023 Soil Conservation Activities

Soil and Water Conservation Programs (SWCP)

Under Soil and Water Conservation Programs (SWCP), the LPNNRD allocated \$83,029.99 of state funds (Dept. Natural Resources) for land treatment practices during fiscal year 2023 in cooperation with 12 different landowner projects. In addition, 3 Buffer Strip contracts were administered with \$12,258 in state funds.

For fiscal year 2024, \$92,179.61 of state funds (from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources) and \$25,000 of local funds will be allocated for soil and water conservation practices through the LPNNRD Lands for Conservation Program (LFC). The LFC program offers landowners a per/acre payment to set aside production ground to allow for summer construction. This lessens the burden on the fall construction season allowing more conservation work to be implemented.

Wahoo Creek Water Quality Land Treatment Efforts

Wahoo Creek in Saunders County, Nebraska, has resided on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) list of impaired water bodies for decades. To address the impaired status of Wahoo Creek, LPNNRD in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) developed the Wahoo Creek Watershed Water Quality Management Plan in 2013. These plans are updated every 5 years and the District is in the process of completing another update. This plan identifies goals to reduce excess phosphorus, nitrogen, soil sediments, and E. coli bacteria in the Wahoo Creek Watershed. This plan meets the EPA's requirement of containing "Nine Elements" of an effective watershed management plan. The plan identifies water quality goals to protect and enhance the quality of all water resources within the Wahoo Creek. Sub-watersheds within the Wahoo Creek Watershed were prioritized for future water quality projects. LPNNRD in partnership with EPA, NDEE, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) identified four Wahoo Creek sub-watersheds as National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) areas to receive special EQIP and EPA 319 funding for landowners to complete conservation practices to help achieve the numerous identified water quality goals.

Shell Creek Watershed EPA Section 319 Water Quality Improvement Efforts

Shell Creek is a major tributary of the Lower Platte River. Land use in the approximately 305,000 acre watershed is predominantly row crop agriculture. Portions of Shell Creek are on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) impaired waters list. The most notable impairments include E. coli (bacteria) and Atrazine.

The Shell Creek Watershed Improvement

Group (SCWIG) is a volunteer committee that formed in 1999 to lead local efforts to identify problems and to promote implementation of conservation practices to improve water quality in Shell Creek. This evolved into an advisory group to LPNNRD continuing to provide local leadership toward reducing erosion and water quality impairments in the watershed. A community-based planning approach was used to gather input from the citizens of the watershed for development of the Shell Creek Watershed Environmental Enhancement Plan that emphasizes combinations of practices that improve water quality.

Over the past 23 years, the Shell Creek Watershed has benefited with over \$2 million in EPA Section 319 funds combined with approximately \$4 million in partnering federal and local funds for assisting landowners in establishing Best Management Practices on their farms. These efforts resulted in Shell Creek becoming the first agricultural watershed in the nation to have a segment delisted for atrazine contamination in FY 2018.

In FY 2023, the NRD secured \$779,000 in grants from EPA/NDEE Section 319 and the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET). These grant dollars matched with local funds are expected to yield over \$1.4 million of water quality work in the watershed over the next three years.

Erosion and Sediment Complaints

The LPNNRD responds to occasional erosion and sediment complaints. In most cases, these complaints are resolved before going through the formal complaint process. Many cases are drainage issues that are resolved between the District and landowners. During FY2022 NRD staff was subpoenaed on a case between two neighbors that could not be resolved amicably. The case has yet to be resolved as both parties continue to work together. During FY2023 LPNNRD was contacted by a landowner concerned about the placement of a tile outlet near his fence/property line. The work being completed on the neighbor's property was not

being done with NRD, or NRCS, approval. The NRD reached out to the neighbor's and through multiple conversations was able to come to an agreement that satisfied both parties.

FY 2024 Soil Conservation Objectives

- Use technical assistance from the NRCS in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of conservation measures applied to the land.
- Use Federal, state, and local funds to promote and implement land and water treatment projects in priority areas of Wahoo Creek Watershed to reduce erosion and improve water quality. The NRD plans to coordinate with local NRCS through the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), NDEE's 319 program, and local funding efforts to achieve the goal.
- Continue encouraging the implementation of summer conservation construction utilizing federal funding within the Wahoo Creek Watershed through the Lands for Conservation program; for FY24 the NRD has approved \$19,600 for the set aside of 85 acres.
- Administer \$92,179.61 of State NSWCP funds and \$25,000 of local cost-share and grant funds to landowners for the construction of terraces, tile outlets, waterways, diversions, small dams, planting of permanent vegetation, and maintaining water quality.
- Continue to promote conservation tillage measures, pasture & range management, sustainable agriculture, and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), through news releases and the district's newsletter.
- Recognize the Outstanding Soil and Water Conservationists.
- Continue to assist landowners in resolving soil erosion and sediment complaints.
- Provide financial support and staff time to conservation education activities.

- Continue to work closely with locally-led conservation groups to promote soil and water conservation throughout the district.
- Partner with the Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group (SCWIG), EPA/NDEE, NET, and NRCS toward continuing implementation of Best Management Practices in the Shell Creek Environmental Enhancement Plan Implementation.
- Work with NRCS, NDEE, NET, Saunders County, and the Wahoo Creek locally led Steering Committee in pursuing additional federal and state funds to assist with land treatment practices as defined in water quality objectives in the Wahoo Creek Watershed Water Quality Plan.
- Assist with the formation of local landowner advisory steering committees in the Wahoo and Bone/Skull Creek Watersheds for planning soil & water conservation practices and flood reduction.
- Use existing and new technology and GIS software programs for implementing and promoting soil conservation practices.
- Promote the use of and make available soil surveys and land use information.
- Continue to support Locally Led Landowner Groups to promote and implement soil and water conservation practices.

FY 2025-2029 Soil Conservation Long Range Objectives

- FY 2024-2028 Soil Conservation Long Range Objectives (Sean, Ryan) DONE
- Maintain existing land treatment practices and programs.
- Continue to work with all counties in the district to reduce roadside erosion.
- Administer NET and NDEE/EPA 319 Grant Programs to improve water quality throughout Wahoo Creek, Shell Creek, and the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance priority watersheds.
- Look for new and innovative soil and water conservation methods.
- Partner with NRCS, UNL Extension, and landowners to improve all aspects of their water and soil quality.
- Continue to support the Land and Range Judging Contests.
- Continue targeting SWCP land treatment program funds for priority watersheds in the District.



FLOOD CONTROL & DAMAGE REDUCTION ACTIVITIES

Projects have been completed in priority areas in the LPNNRD to help reduce flooding and provide grade stabilization. Projects have been completed in Bellwood, Clear Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Sand and Duck Creek, Swedeburg, and Rawhide Creek watersheds. Current high priority flood reduction areas include Bone Creek, Shell Creek,, Skull Creek, and Wahoo Creek watersheds. On federal and state projects where the LPNNRD acts as project sponsor, the district obtains land rights and is also responsible for operation and maintenance activities on these projects after they are built.

The LPNNRD offers local assistance for the construction of small dams that can help counties and/or landowners protect county roads, control erosion, and provide water for livestock and wildlife.

FY 2023 Flood Control and Damage Reduction Activities

Wahoo Creek Flood Reduction Efforts

The NRD is currently in the process of building ten flood reduction dams in Wahoo Creek watershed, estimated to cost \$19.7 million in 2020. Federal (WFPO) and state funds (JEDI) are expected to fund the entire project including planning, design, permitting, land rights, construction, and construction oversight. Construction will begin in FY2024 on three sites: 26a, 26b, and 27. Construction is expected to begin in FY2025 on the remaining seven sites: 55, 66, 77, 82, 84, 86, and 86. Completion of all ten dam sites is anticipated by the end of FY28.

Sand Creek Environmental Restoration Project (Lake Wanahoo)

With the invaluable assistance of numerous local, state, and federal partners, 2011

witnessed the completion of construction on Lake Wanahoo's earth embankment. The breakwater feature and the fisheries component were completed a few years prior to the embankment. Recreation components were completed for Lake Wanahoo in FY2011. Construction of seven upstream flood reduction/environmental enhancement structures were completed in FY12-14. In FY19, LPNNRD assumed Lake Wanahoo's recreation management responsibilities from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Operation and Maintenance

District staff completed inspections on 45 watershed structures and special projects in the NRD in FY 23. These inspections help detect problems before they become serious. Also during the 2023 fiscal year, noxious weeds and volunteer trees were sprayed on 45 dams, Clear Creek Levee, and the Rawhide Ditch System. Annual maintenance activities such as removing debris, repairing fences and unplugging risers were completed at many of the dam locations. The District is currently working with NRCS and a Engineer Consultant in the rehabilitation of dam Cottonwood 21-A.

Army Corps of Engineers 205 Flood Studies

Over the past many years, the District has partnered with local entities and the US Army Corps of Engineers to study flood protection alternatives for their areas. In 2004, LPNNRD partnered with Fremont, Inglewood, and Dodge County to look at a potential levee project to remove areas from the Platte River 100-year ice induced floodplain. In FY 2017, the Fremont study evolved into a General Investigation (GI) Study which determined that there is not a feasible structural solution (levee) to the City of Fremont's flood threat from the Platte River. In 2018 the GI Study evolved back to a 205

Non-Structural Study for the City of Fremont and Dodge County. This effort will continue in FY 2024.

In 2005, LPNNRD entered into an interlocal agreement with the City of Schuyler to evaluate levee protection options to protect the city from flooding from the Platte River and Shell Creek. In FY 2012, the Schuyler 205 Study was completed and entered into the project design phase. In FY 2014 the design phase was completed and LPNNRD assisted Schuyler with obtaining needed land rights for the Shell Creek Levee portion of the project which began construction activities in the spring of 2014 and most construction activities were completed in the fall of 2015. LPNNRD continued to assist Schuyler in FY 2018 with closing out the project with the Army Corps of Engineers. Schuyler continues to do a great job in maintaining the levee.

FY 2024 Flood Control and Damage Reduction Objectives

- Continue with accelerated land treatment efforts in identified priority watersheds in the District.
- Complete annual and/or biennial inspections on 45 watershed structures; spray noxious weeds & cut and treat trees on 45 dams, Clear Creek Levee, and Rawhide ditch; complete regular maintenance activities at all sites.
- Continue to be an active partner on the Joint Water Management Advisory Board to explore flood reduction and drainage solutions in portions of Dodge County within LPNNRD.
- Partner with the City of Fremont, Dodge County, and Papio-Missouri River NRD to fund operation and maintenance of established USGS cameras and water gauges at five locations along the Lower Platte River.
- Partner with Dodge County and City of Fremont on FEMA Drainage

Improvement Project.

- Continue to educate the public on watershed management and flood reduction in LPNNRD newsletters, news releases, and our website.
- Cooperate with landowners and counties in evaluating small dam sites for cost-share throughout the district.
- Continue to partner with the Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, City of Fremont, Englewood, and Dodge County on exploring non-structural opportunities for feasible flood control solutions.
- Support the City of Schuyler for exploring non-structural opportunities for feasible flood control solutions from the Platte River through the LPNNRD District-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Work with Communities, Counties, and other entities on projects identified in our District-wide All Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Complete easement acquisition for all ten Wahoo Creek Watershed flood reduction dam sites.
- Complete engineering designs on Wahoo Creek Dam Sites 55, 66, 77, 82, 84, 85, 86.
- Begin construction on Wahoo Creek Dam Sites 26a, 26b, and 27.
- Begin the process of updating LPNNRD's district-wide All Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Work with Dodge County, City of Fremont, and other JWMAB members toward the completion of the Rawhide Watershed WFPO Planning efforts.
- Partner with NRCS through the Dam Rehabilitation program to rehabilitate dam Cottonwood 21-A.

FY 2025-2029 Flood Control and Damage Reduction Long Range Objectives

- Continue to commit funds and staff time toward completing flood water control/reduction structures in the Wahoo Creek Watershed.

- Continue to budget staff time and funds to maintain and operate completed flood control structures that are sponsored by the LPNNRD.
- Develop a long term plan for Operation and Maintenance costs associated with large structures.
- Continue to explore flood reduction opportunities for Bone Creek, Shell Creek, and Skull Creek Watersheds.
- Continue to encourage cities and counties in the district to accept and implement Floodplain Management Authorities.
- Assist Fremont, Inglewood, and Dodge County with non-structural flood protection projects as identified by the Army Corps of Engineers study and the Hazard Mitigation Plan Flood Resiliency study.
- Assist Schuyler with non-structural Platte River flood protection project opportunities as they become available.
- Assist District Communities in evaluating future flood protection for their communities through updating the District's Hazard Mitigation Plan and assisting with identified projects.
- Construct ten approved Wahoo Creek flood water reduction dams by the end of 2028.
- Continue to work with JWMAB members on the numerous projects identified as flood reduction/drainage improvement projects.
- Partner with NRCS in the Dam Rehabilitation Program on dam Cottonwood 21-A.



The district administers several programs designed to enhance the region’s forest, range, and wildlife land, including the Tree Planting Program, Wildlife Habitat Programs with Nebraska Game & Parks and Pheasants Forever, SWCP Program, and Mitigation Program. The district also sponsors educational activities such as Range Judging and Land Judging contests, and other school-oriented activities.

FY 2023 Forestry, Range, and Wildlife Habitat Activities

Tree Program

One of the most visible and popular programs offered by the LPNNRD is the district’s tree planting program. As a direct result of this program, begun in 1973, an estimated 873,225 trees and shrubs have been planted in the district. Trees and shrubs may be obtained from the NRD for windbreaks, shelterbelts, wildlife habitat, woodlots, and Christmas tree plantings. Besides providing a planting service, the NRD also designs tree planting plans and offers technical advice on ground preparation for tree sites.

During the spring of 2023, 10,475 trees and shrubs were distributed to District residents. Of this total, 3,606 were planted by the NRD field crew at 12 sites.

Wildlife Program

Lower Platte North continues to encourage landowners to set aside land for wildlife habitat by using Federal Programs and Programs provided by Nebraska Game & Parks and Pheasant Forever. These programs include Corners For Wildlife and Wild Nebraska.

Community Forestry Program

In FY 2022-2023 LPNNRD donated 900 seedlings for schools in Fremont and Newman

Grove; provided trees to the District’s annual Spring Conservation Sensation; and provided trees for the Fremont EcoFair. The District budgets \$2,000 for Community tree development projects. The District did not assist a Community during the fiscal year.

FY 2024 Forestry, Range, and Wildlife Habitat Objectives

- Plant and distribute conservation trees and shrubs through the district’s Tree Planting Program.
- Continue to include tree planting as an eligible cost-share practice under the
- SWCP program.
- Offer trees and give staff presentations to elementary students across the district.
- Assist cooperators with signing up for Wildlife Programs.
- Cooperate with the Extension Service and the NRCS in obtaining tree orders from District residents.
- Provide cost-sharing for the conversion of cropland to grassland through the SWCP program.
- Cooperate with Pheasant Forever Chapters to enhance wildlife habitat and establish windbreaks.

FY 2025-2029 Forestry, Range, and Wildlife Habitat Long Range Objectives

- Increase tree and shrub sales and planting each year through the district’s Tree Planting Program for qualified property owners.
- Provide information and education on tree planting, woodland management, grassland management, and proper wildlife habitat enhancement through media, tours, and schools.

- Continue to administer Wildlife Habitat programs in cooperation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and other partnering entities as opportunities arise.



FY 2023 Recreation Activities

Czechland Lake Recreation Area

Czechland Lake Recreation Area is a multipurpose project located one mile north of Prague, Nebraska on Highway 79. Flood control, recreation, and education are the main benefits of the project. Located at a convenient distance from Omaha, Lincoln, Fremont, and Wahoo, the 85 surface acre lake is situated on 265 acres of public access land operated and maintained by the LPNNRD.

State park permits and fees are not required for entrance to the area. Czechland Lake has 11 electrical camper pads at an \$18/night fee for the use of a camping pad. There are also three non-electrical pads. A Nebraska Fishing License is required for anglers. The lake fishery is managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, which stocks and monitors fish populations. Catfish, Bluegill, Northern Pike, and Largemouth Bass were initially stocked in Czechland Lake.

Originally built as one of twelve floodwater structures in the Cottonwood Creek Watershed, Czechland Lake has developed into one of the area's most popular recreation spots. The reservoir and recreation area development was built at a total cost of \$1.8 million. Funding for the project was shared by the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, Saunders County, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and LPNNRD. Grant monies from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have been used to reduce non-point source pollution entering the lake and to provide educational resources.

The Czechland recreation area was used extensively during FY 2023 generating approximately \$10,000 in camping revenue. Mowing, trash removal, repair, and upkeep of park equipment, and thistle control kept LPNNRD park staff very busy during the spring and summer.

Homestead Lake (Skull Creek Site #55)

Construction was completed on Homestead Lake in 2001. The dam offers flood control for nearby communities, and has been developed for public recreation. Recreation facilities include a shelter, restroom, picnic areas, a boat ramp, and hunting areas. FY 2023 proved to be another very popular year for recreationists as the area was extensively used.

Lake Wanahoo

Work was completed on recreation facilities at Lake Wanahoo one mile north of Wahoo in FY 2012. Recreation facilities at the 1,600 acre site straddle the 662-acre lake, with camping and boating access on the west side and a day use area on the east. A rocky hiking/biking trail winds throughout the park, linking the east and west side recreation areas over a breakwater levee one mile north of the dam. Mowed trails north of the levee provide access to undeveloped areas set aside for wildlife habitat.

The camping area contains 75 camper pads, 54 tent camping sites, and 6 primitive cabins. All camper pads are equipped with electrical hookups and are rock surfaced. All sites have fire rings and picnic tables.

The recreation area offers access to two large boat ramps wide enough to accommodate four boats at a time. Boating on the entire lake is no-wake only.

The day use area on the east side of the lake has two large picnic shelters and two smaller ones, all offering scenic views of the lake. In FY 2017 a dump station for RV's was constructed on the east day use area as well as a disc golf course/nature educational trail.

Both the camping and day use areas provide excellent fishing access, with a total of seven fishing jetties. One jetty on each side has an attached handicapped pier. The lake was stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, blue

catfish, crappie, northern pike, and walleye beginning in 2008.

Limited hunting opportunities will continue to be available at Lake Wanahoo through the Game & Parks Commission PATH Program, where adults can schedule a time to mentor a youth hunter at designated hunting sites north of the recreation area.

The Lake Wanahoo Recreation Area was opened to the public in spring 2012. An operation and maintenance plan was developed with the assistance of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Pheasants Forever in FY 2014 which identified activities that were implemented in 2015.

In FY 2019, LPNNRD assumed the responsibilities of administering Lake Wanahoo as a public recreation area from the Nebraska Games & Park Commission.

In FY 2020, the Clint Johannes Education Building was completed on the day use portion of the recreation area. This facility provides a protected outdoor education space for LPNNRD education activities, as well as a public rental facility for the public. Also in FY 2020, six new primitive cabins were installed in the primitive camping portion of the park to give visitors a unique alternative to tent camping.

FY 2025-2029 Recreation Long Range Objectives

- Continue to evaluate the development of new outdoor public recreational opportunities as they arise.
- Continue to assist NE Game & Parks and Pheasant Forever in developing new areas offering public access.
- Install a new fish cleaning station on the West side of Lake Wanahoo.

FY 2024 Recreation Objectives

- Continue to budget funds for maintenance, including grass mowing, tree trimming, grading roads, outhouse cleaning, trash removal, painting, and noxious weed control, at Lake Wanahoo, Czechland Lake, and Homestead Lake Recreation Areas.
- LPNNRD will continue managing all recreation at the Lake Wanahoo recreation area.
- Design and installation of 10-14 slip marina on west side of the lake. Marina will enable campers with boats the opportunity to keep their boats on the water during their stay.



It is the general policy of the LPNNRD not to provide financial assistance for drainage improvement and channel rectification unless a project has public benefit and is sponsored by a county, city, Drainage District, or a group of landowners through an established Improvement Project Area. Under this policy, the district has cooperated on several projects that have provided public benefit.

FY 2024 Drainage Improvement & Channel Rectification Objectives

- Worked with Colfax County to complete new Shell Creek South Channel Improvement/Benching Projects.
- Partnered with Dodge County and Fremont to support drainage improvements east of Fremont through FEMA.
- Partnered with the North Bend Drainage District, Dodge County, and City of Fremont to support the drainage improvement project for the North Bend drainage ditch through FEMA.
- Continue to oversee the Rawhide Creek West Branch Project to ensure that landowners properly control vegetation.
- Continue providing assistance to Platte Center with stabilizing segments of Elm Creek.

FY 2025-2029 Drainage Improvement & Channel Rectification Long Range Objectives

- Evaluate potential technical and funding assistance to counties, cities, and other entities in the district that sponsor sound drainage and channel improvement projects.



Over 30 years ago, vast changes occurred in Nebraska's solid waste regulations. Landfills that weren't properly designed, operated, or sited were required to shut down, as were unauthorized dumps. In order for a landfill to operate, it must be approved by the State and receive a permit. If a permit is not issued, the landfill cannot legally operate. Currently, the only permitted landfill in the Lower Platte North NRD is a facility near David City.

FY 2024 Waste Disposal & Pollution Objectives

- Promote recycling efforts in the district through education programs, newsletters, and news releases.
- Participate in education efforts to promote the reduction of pollution to our air, water, and soil resources.
- Cooperate and be supportive of other group and agency pollution control efforts, education, and/or regulation.

FY 2025-2029 Waste Disposal & Pollution Long Range Objectives

- Assist and encourage all District communities in establishing collection locations for recyclable wastes.
- Assist District cities and counties in establishing pickup days for hazardous household and farmstead wastes as opportunities arise.
- Promote waste reduction efforts in the district through education and incentives.



A major responsibility of the Lower Platte North NRD is to keep the public aware of the district's various projects and programs, and to inform and educate children and adults about the wise use and management of our natural resources.

FY 2023 Information & Education Activities

During fiscal year 2023, the Lower Platte North NRD conducted many activities to help residents learn the importance of our soil and water resources and to stay informed of issues and concerns regarding natural resources. Some of the highlights included the following.

Publications and Marketing

The NRD distributes two newsletters each fiscal year. The Winter issue of "The Viaduct" newsletter includes an additional page that contains the Annual Report. In FY 2012, the district switched distribution of "The Viaduct" newsletter from direct mail subscriptions to inserts in area newspapers. In FY 2023, more than 20,000 copies of each newsletter were distributed in eight newspapers and via email. Copies of the newsletter are also available on the website at www.lpnrd.org/downloads.

Various brochures describing LPNNRD programs and services were updated as needed in FY 2023. These brochures are displayed in the office and distributed during LPNNRD sponsored events and exhibit booths.

Press releases are distributed to district newspapers, email lists and radio stations. Numerous ads spotlighting different NRD programs and upcoming deadlines air on KTIC Radio throughout the year. Digital ads on the Wahoo newspaper website continued in FY 2023. In FY 2020, the LPNNRD began airing 30-second program commercials on News Channel Nebraska covering the various

departments of the LPNNRD. In FY2023, a recreation video featuring Czechland Lake, Homestead Lake, and Lake Wanahoo was produced and aired on News Channel Nebraska.

The NRD continues to maintain information and education outreach for the district through the use of social media outlets on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These outlets are maintained weekly and provide information along with photos and videos about the district's ongoing activities and events.

Website

The NRD's website at www.lpnrd.org contains information on nearly all of the district's projects and programs, along with staff information, board of directors information, as well as committee and board meeting minutes, and district publications. Online applications and registration forms for various projects and programs are also available. Additionally, online payment capabilities continue to allow customers to pay for trees, rural water bills, and Lake Wanahoo permits. The website continues to be updated frequently.

Video Promotion

Beginning in FY 2018, 60-second, and 30-second videos were created to promote the conservation efforts of departments of the NRD. Past directors, current directors, and current staff have been featured in the videos. Promotional videos have been created for the Water Department, Operations & Maintenance department, Projects department, Information and Education department, and the three LPNNRD recreation areas (Czechland Lake, Homestead Lake, and Lake Wanahoo). Clips from all of the videos are combined to create one video that features portions of each department at the LPNNRD. These videos are shown as educational purposes for presentations, on the LPNNRD website,

commercials through area television stations, and featured on social media platforms.

Education Programs

During FY 2023, the district continued with two year-long programs. The St. Wenceslaus Pre-kindergarten students learn about wildlife, trees, birds, soil and water conservation through books, pictures, stories, and hands-on activities. The students visited Lake Wanahoo at the end of the year for a field trip filled with nature hikes, nature crafts, and disc golf. The district teamed up with Wahoo Public middle school students for the Survival Club program, making a total of three school years of the program. LPNNRD staff and other outdoor enthusiasts met monthly with students during the school year to learn about hiking, knot tying, 2-legged predators, 4-legged predators, fishing, first aid, foraging for wild foods, fire building and other outdoor survival skills. Opening up the program to the whole middle school had student attendance consistent with almost 30 students for the campfire building exercise and an average of 10 students per month. The end of the year camp out at Lake Wanahoo will be a priority in FY 2024. Trinity Lutheran Middle School met with Staff at Lake Wanahoo for a half day event, where we worked through survival club activities such as knot tying, 2 and 4 legged predators, everyday carry kits, foraging for wild foods, campfire building, and campfire cooking.

The district continues to participate in the Career Exploration Opportunities (CEO) Program with Wahoo Public Schools. During the fall semester of 2023, LPNNRD staff hosted one high school senior and he rotated between each department to learn about the LPNNRD responsibilities. The district will host another student during the fall of FY 2024. This student will be with staff every day from 1:30-3:30 but will drop down to three days a week starting in November.

The Clint Johannes Education Building is utilized for events of all kinds. Local teachers and other organizations will use it for their

students and staff as a meeting space with a great view and amenities. The LPNNRD utilizes the building for educational events each month. The event, Coffee Lakeside, has impacted close to 100 people, who meet in the building once a month. Topics included wildflowers, fireflies, animal adaptations, fall activities, phenology, nature based play, lake ecosystems, water flower identification, fungi, and more. All other NRD related events are also hosted in the building or another location at Lake Wanahoo.

Seven new events were held at the LPNNRD with a total of 10 held throughout the fiscal year. Wildflowers and Wine and All About Bees were two repeating events that continue to draw in large crowds. These events center around pollinators, their habitat, and how we can continue to provide natural places on both small and large scales to aid in the conservation of these species. The new events offered were: Trivia and Game Nights; Back to School Night; 1st Annual Fall Festival; Native American Heritage Day; Natural Resources Camp; Community Fishing Event; and Nocturnal Nights. These events drew in participants of all ages with some returning and some new individuals. Staff also participated in the county-wide, Kid's Summer Institute, that ran all of June. Students participated in dip netting for macroinvertebrates; birding; disc golf; nature journaling; and wild about wildflowers. These classes were held at Lake Wanahoo. Staff met with North Bend Public Library and Yutan Public Library for story time hours where owl pellets were dissected and birds were studied. Some of the FY 2023 events were made possible by partnerships with other agencies, organizations, and businesses. Strengthening these relationships and exploring new ones will continue to be a goal for FY 2024.

The Lower Platte North NRD and Lower Platte South NRD rotate in hosting the East Central Land Judging Contest. Land Judging is a competition for high students that challenges them to gain a better understanding of soil structure and land evaluation. The Lower Platte North NRD works with local NRCS employees to choose a site location and help with site

preparation. The Lower Platte North NRD staff and NRCS staff will assist in the preparation, contest monitoring, and scoring efforts during the contest. The East Central Land Judging Contest was held by Lower Platte North NRD on October 5th, 2022. 253 students competed in this event. The Area 5 Range Judging Contest was also held in FY 2023, where staff at the LPNNRD helped host the competition. 260 students competed in this event that was held at Camp Moses Merrill.

The annual LPNNRD Spring Conservation Sensation was held on May 3rd at Lake Wanahoo. Fifth and sixth grade students from Saunders, Butler, and Dodge Counties participated in various activities. Hands-on activities were presented by LPNNRD staff, additional personnel from various agencies and organizations, and volunteers to teach students about the environment, natural resources, tree planting, lake ecosystems, wildlife education and more. 300 students attended the event.

The second annual LPNNRD Natural Resources Camp was held at Lake Wanahoo. For one week, attendees learned how to fish, how to go birding, about the amphibians and reptiles of Nebraska, and insects, both macroinvertebrates they found in the lake and the land dwelling butterflies and moths. Eight boys attended the week-long camp. The hands-on activities were the students favorite parts per their evaluations and they are looking forward to returning next summer. The goal for FY 2024 is a full camp of 15 attendees, and new activities such as fire starting and campfire cooking, and archery.

Test Your Well Event is a program that partners with area FFA chapters to host public events, providing nitrate testing of water samples from private wells at no cost to the attendees. The district held 3 events in FY 2023 that involved over 20 students. The goal for FY 2024 is to have every FFA chapter in our district host a test your well night.

Staff at the LPNNRD went into 29 classrooms, attended 2 outdoor classrooms days, held 6 field trips, and interacted with every grade level Pre-K through 12th. Four new schools,

Aquinas Catholic, Trinity Lutheran, Lindsay Holy Family, and Fishers School (Schuyler), invited us into their classrooms this year amongst other schools we've previously attended. Some of the goals for FY 2024 involve finding teachers in school districts such as North Bend, Mead, or Yutan, where we haven't previously been to, and work with them to bring fun and educational activities to their classrooms. Staff is also pushing Coffee Lakeside out of Wahoo and into other communities. North Bend Public Library will be hosting a Coffee Lakeside in the fall of FY 2024.

District staff provided various presentations and activities during natural resources festivals, field days, out-of-school time programs, school classrooms, online activities on the LPNNRD website, and adult education events. As a result of the district's educational outreach efforts, there was interaction with approximately 2,774 youth and 300 adults in FY 2022. These numbers do not include the 513 students who participated in Land and Range Judging. The interactions this fiscal year brought us to over 1,000 more student participants than the previous year. LPNNRD will strive for even more interactions in the years to come.

Awards, Contests, and Events

In addition to marketing efforts, the LPNNRD provides a physical presence with exhibit booths at local county fairs, agriculture expos and other events across the district. In FY 2023, exhibit booths were displays at the Soybean Day in Wahoo, Fremont Corn Expo, Career Fair at Midland University, Fremont Eco Fair, and Butler County Fair. Donations were provided to the Saunders County Fair and Dodge County Fair. Materials at the events included brochures of the NRD's projects and programs, and various promotional items.

The Lower Platte North NRD offers three \$1,000 scholarships for graduating seniors who have been involved in the Shell Creek Watershed Monitoring Program and plan to pursue higher education relating to science or natural resources. The Shell Creek Watershed

Improvement Group (SCWIG) prioritizes education outreach to improve public awareness of the project and encourage conservation with best management practices. Newman Grove High School, Lakeview Community Schools, and Schuyler Central High School are involved with the conservation efforts in the watershed. The students spend their summers collecting samples and measurements, analyzing data, and reporting results to determine water quality of the stream.

FY 2024 Information & Education Objectives

- Publish the district newsletter “Viaduct” biannually in an electronic format and as a printed newspaper insert in 10 area newspapers.
- Send timely news releases to the local media on various LPNNRD programs, projects, and activities.
- Disperse pamphlets and other publications about LPNNRD programs.
- Update the district’s website frequently.
- Continue to provide a display at county fairs or agriculture events (up to five major counties) within the district.
- Continue information and education outreach for the district through the use of tools such as local radio stations, local TV stations, and social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).
- Continue with the annual awards and recognition program.
- Provide district elementary students with free trees, as requested, in the spring.
- Provide LPNNRD staff as requested to speak to community organizations and schools on NRD activities and environmental topics.
- Provide various education programs, events, and activities to area schools and out-of-school time programs.
- Host the East Central Region Land Judging Contest in the fall of 2022.
- Host the 32nd Spring Conservation

Sensation in May 2023.

- Develop new programs and promotional projects to aid in outreach efforts of the district.
- Develop a video for the three recreation areas in the district.
- Provide assistance and publications for the students involved in the Shell Creek Watershed Monitoring Program.
- Continue to provide a scholarship for graduating seniors in the Shell Creek Watershed Monitoring Program who plan to pursue higher education relating to science or natural resources.

FY 2025-2029 Information & Education Long Range Objectives

- Search for new and effective ways to inform and educate the public on the NRD purpose and programs.
- Participate with the Information & Education Staff Group to coordinate statewide I&E activities and produce statewide products.
- Increase participation in activities sponsored by other agencies relating to the NRD’s responsibilities.
- Seek to have conservation/environmental education as a part of the school curriculum.
- Support environmental education activities and events throughout the district, and neighboring NRDs.
- Provide assistance for the East Central Region Land Judging Contest in the fall of 2023, hosted by Lower Platte South NRD.
- Assist in the development of an outdoor classroom for a district school.
- Partner with district schools to host Test Your Well Events annually.



LPNNRD Staff

The staff of the Lower Platte North NRD includes 19 full-time and 11 part-time/seasonal employees. The NRD administers a full-time field technician, four field office assistants in Natural Resource Conservation Service county offices, and a Recreation Facilitator for Czechland & Homestead Lake Recreation Areas.

Included in the part-time positions, the district employs seasonal conservation technicians to assist in the layout of land treatment structures. There are seasonal summer employees hired to help with Lake Wanahoo, water sampling, tree planting, and maintenance of LPNNRD projects. Personnel positions and assigned responsibilities may increase in the future as increased project and program responsibilities increase.

Current staff as of September 1, 2023:

Sydney Abbott, **Education Coordinator**
 Daryl Andersen, **Water Resources Manager**
 Jill Breunig, **Bookkeeping Department Head/Administrative Assistant**
 Will Brueggemann, **Water Resources Specialist**
 Ryan Chapman, **Assistant General Manager**
 Duke Dokulil, **Operations & Maintenance Technician**
 Sean Elliott, **Projects/Rural Water Manager**
 Noah Franzen, **Water Resources Specialist**
 Eric Gottschalk, **General Manager**
 Bob Heimann, **Operations & Maintenance Manager**
 David Moore, **Operations & Maintenance Technician**
 Russell Oaklund, **Lead Water Resources Specialist**
 Dave Odvody, **Recreation Facilitator**
 Karen Rezac, **Department/Administrative Assistant**
 Lacey Sabatka, **Information Coordinator**
 Bret Schomer, **Wanahoo Recreation Supervisor/Water Resources Specialist**
 Drew ten Bensel, **Grants/GIS**

Staff Support for NRCS Offices:

Adam Brockman, **Conservation Technician**
 Kimberly Piitz, **NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant (Butler County)**
 Kristin Miller, **NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant (Colfax County)**
 Jessica Marty, **NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant (Dodge County)**
 Marla Milliken, **NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant (Saunders County)**

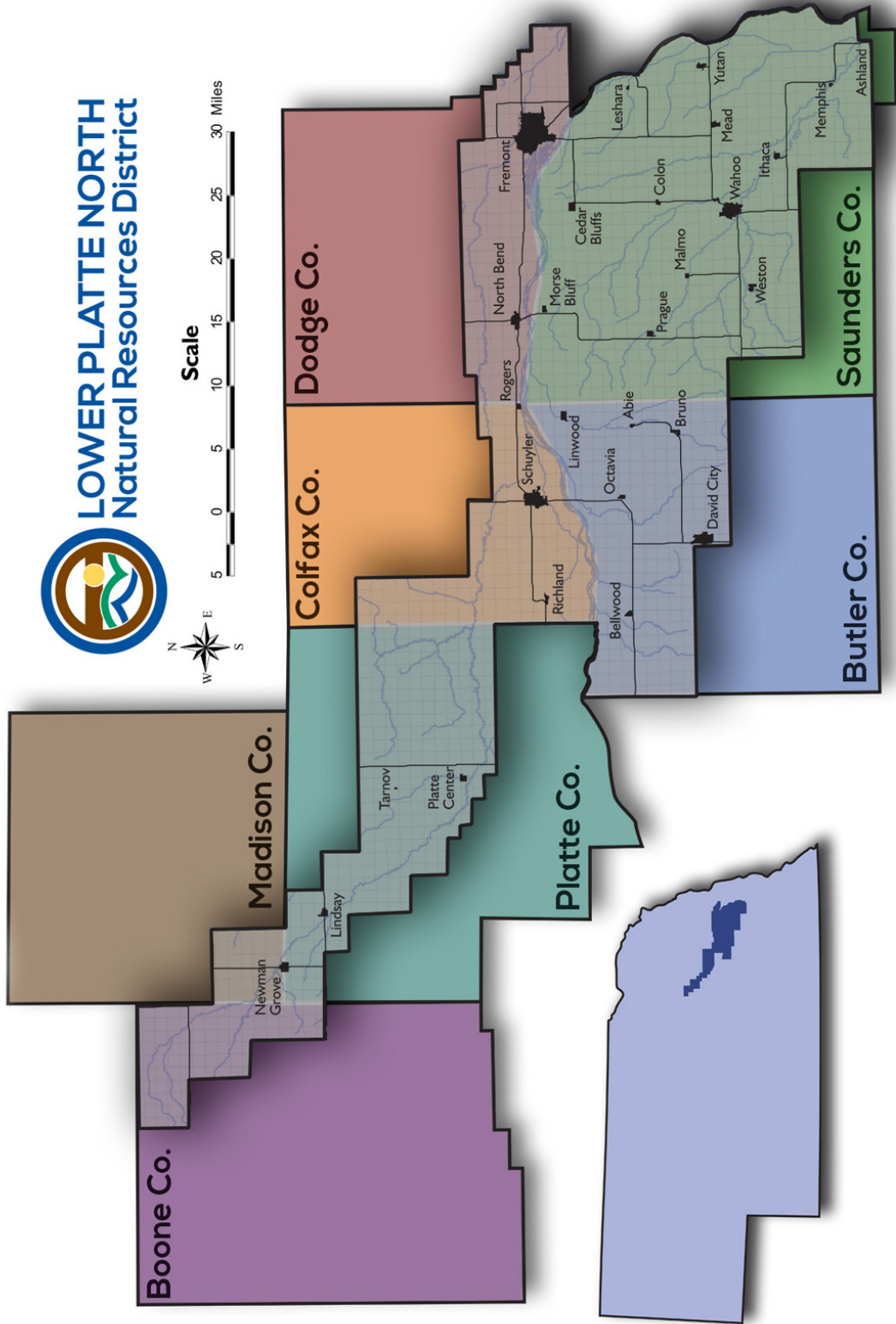


FY 2024 Financial Objectives

- Funding required for the LPNNRD projects and programs for Fiscal Year 2024 requires a general operating budget of \$ 8,761,805 of which \$ 3,480,715 is required from the district's local tax levy. The FY 2024 tax levy of .028652 cents per \$100 actual valuation is required from District property. Projected expenses and income for FY 2024-2029 are shown in Appendix F.
- A tax levy of .028652 means that an owner of a \$150,000 home will pay \$ 42.98 in NRD taxes in FY 2024. An owner of farm land valued at \$7,000 per acre will pay \$ 2.00 an acre/year to the NRD in FY 2024. The LPNNRD levy represents about two percent of the total property tax collected.

FY 2025-2029 Financial Long Range Objectives

- Although it is expected that the amount of revenue from all sources will fluctuate during the next few years, it is anticipated that the LPNNRD will operate at a mill levy between \$0.035 and \$0.055 per \$100 actual valuation as the District continues to assist with flood reduction project priorities and to address our responsibilities with groundwater water quality and quantity management.



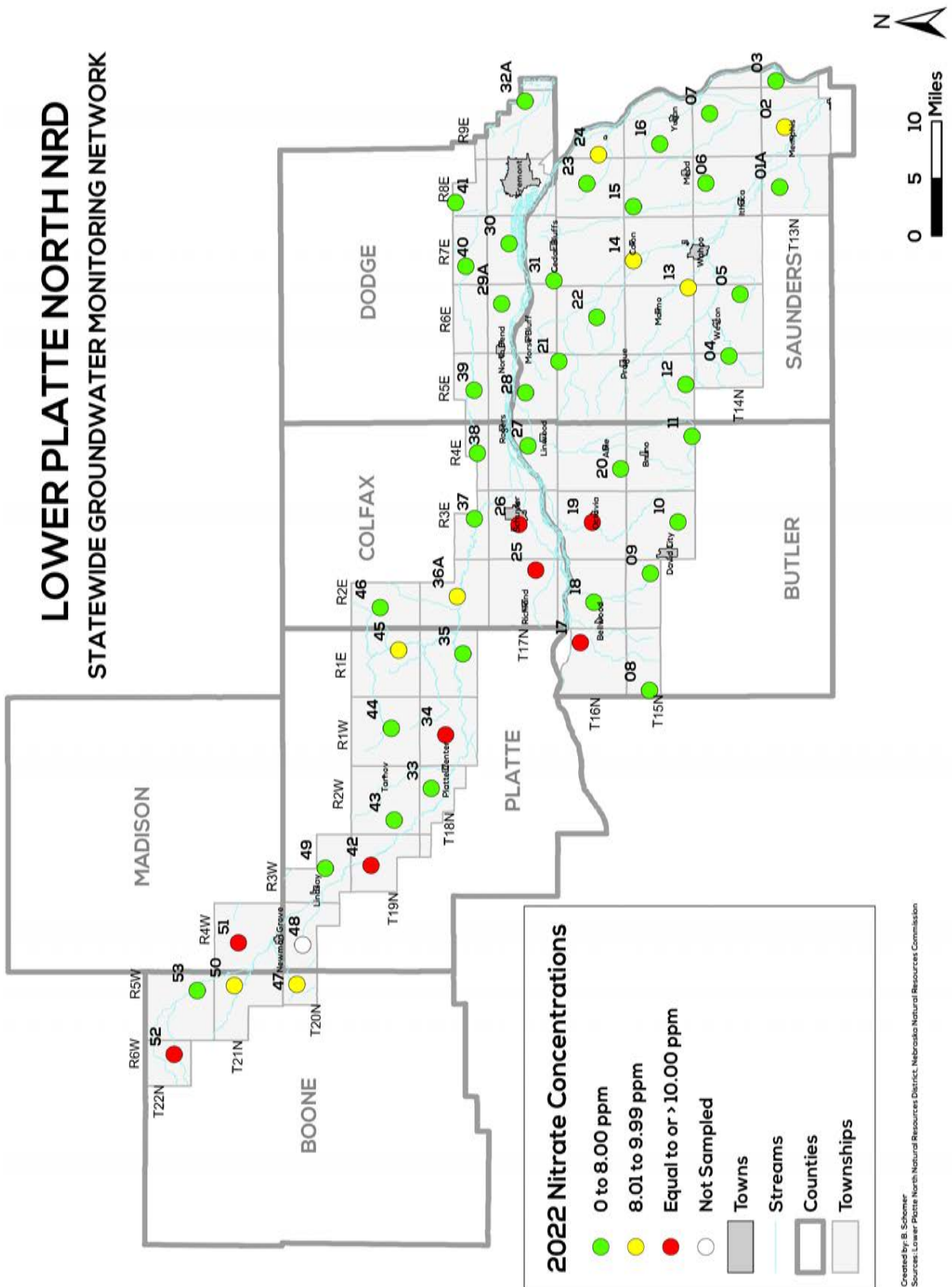


APPENDIX B – Estimated Population by County

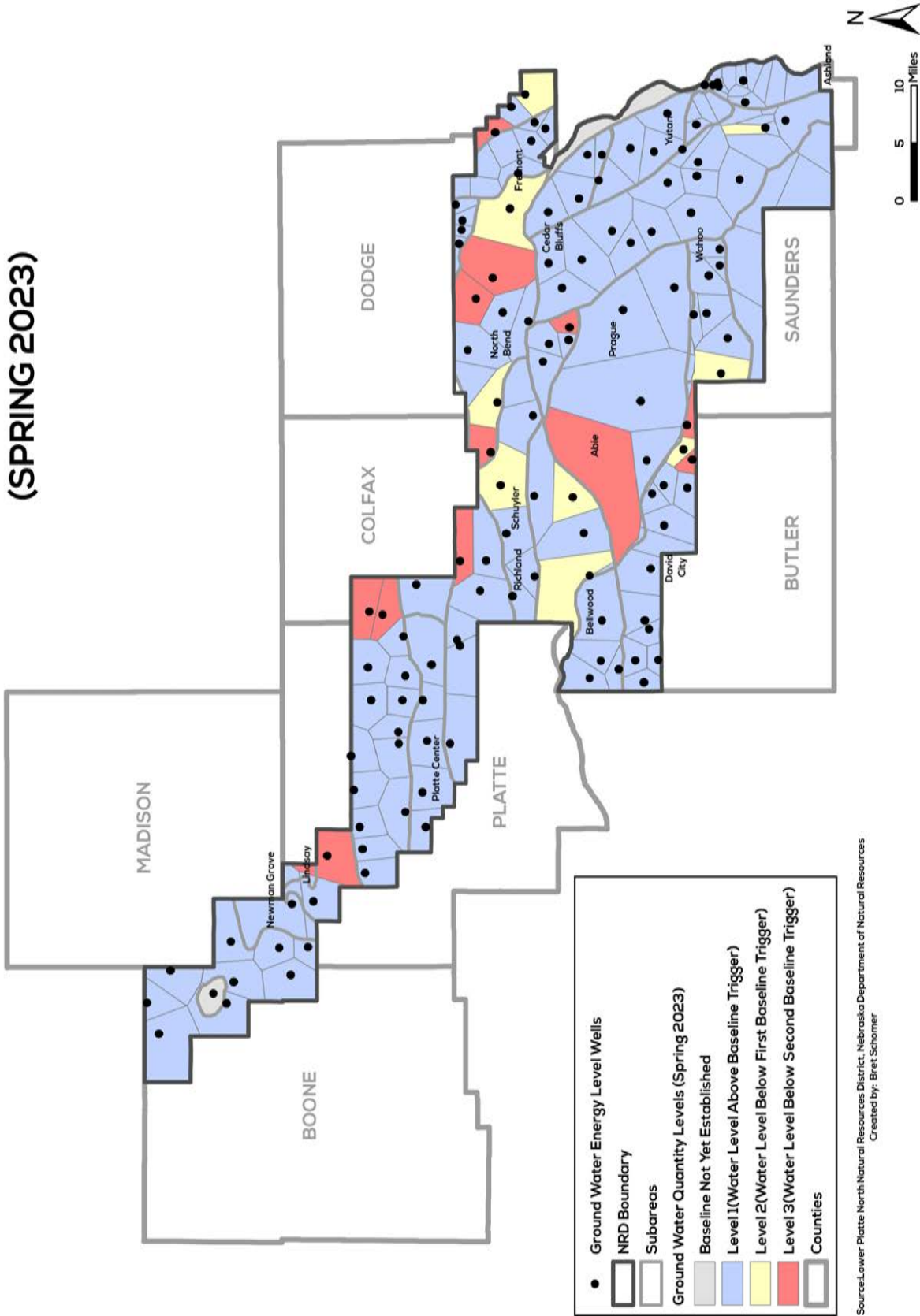
COUNTY	% OF COUNTY IN DISTRICT	ACRES IN DISTRICT	RURAL POPULATION IN DISTRICT	URBAN POPULATION IN DISTRICT	TOTAL
Boone	12.78	56,175	173	0	173
Butler	44.38	167,700	1,815	3,763	5,578
Colfax	40.76	108,582	1,069	6,699	7,768
Dodge	31.96	111,147	3,017	28,800	31,817
Madison	6.25	22,998	155	667	822
Platte	37.78	165,401	2,196	668	2,864
Saunders	81.39	395,098	7,477	8,948	16,425
TOTAL		1,027,101	15,902	49,545	65,447

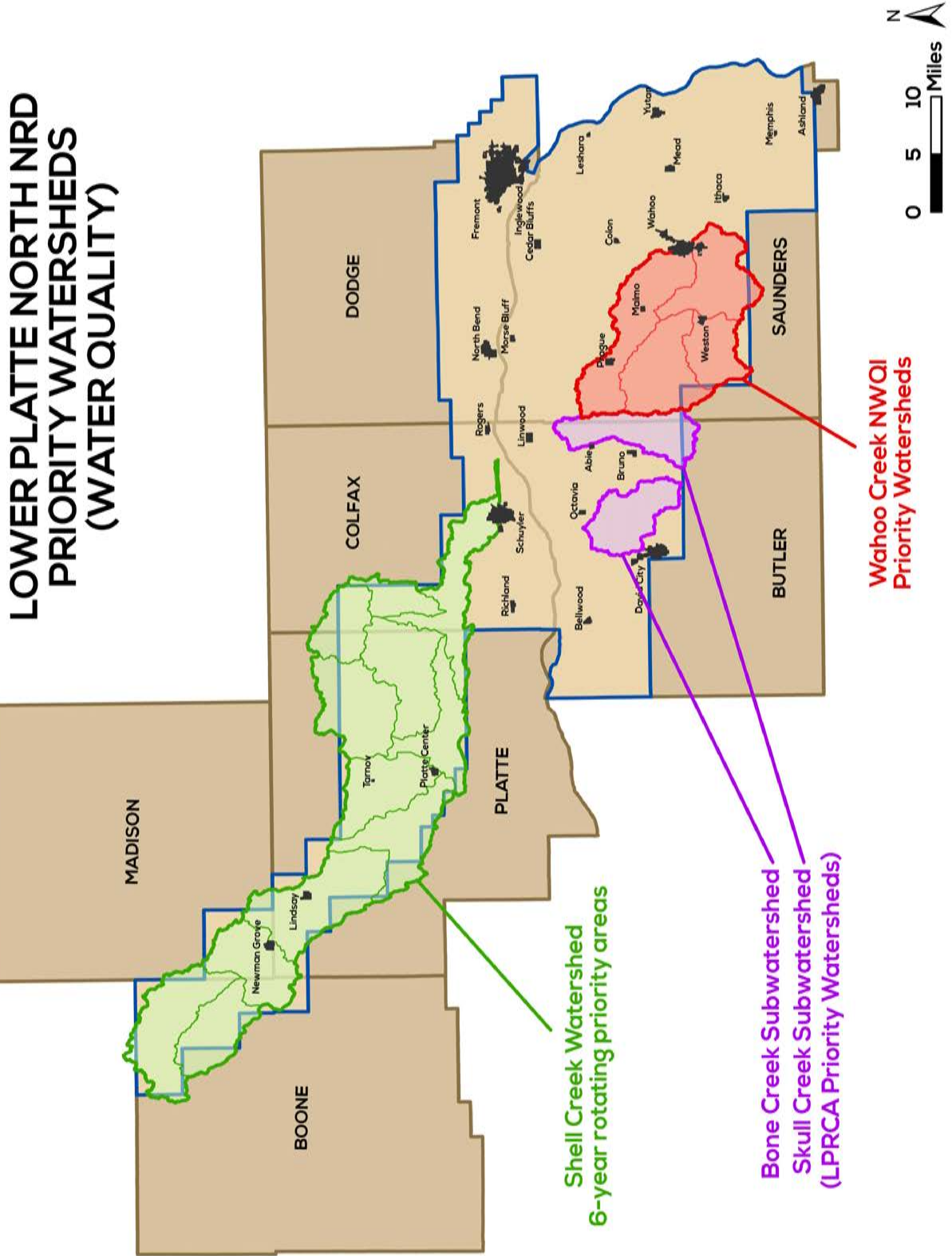
Twenty-eight cities, towns and villages are located within the Lower Platte North NRD, listed below with their populations (according to 2020 United States Census):

Abie	65	Memphis.....	109
Ashland	3,086	Morse Bluff	117
Bellwood.....	407	Newman Grove.....	667
Bruno	95	North Bend.....	1,279
Cedar Bluffs	615	Octavia	107
Colon.....	107	Platte Center	333
David City.....	2,995	Prague	291
Fremont	27,141	Richland	70
Inglewood.....	380	Rogers.....	82
Ithaca	160	Schuyler	6,547
Leshara	108	Tarnov	52
Lindsay	283	Wahoo	4,818
Linwood	94	Weston	250
Malmo	94	Yutan.....	1,347
Mead.....	617		



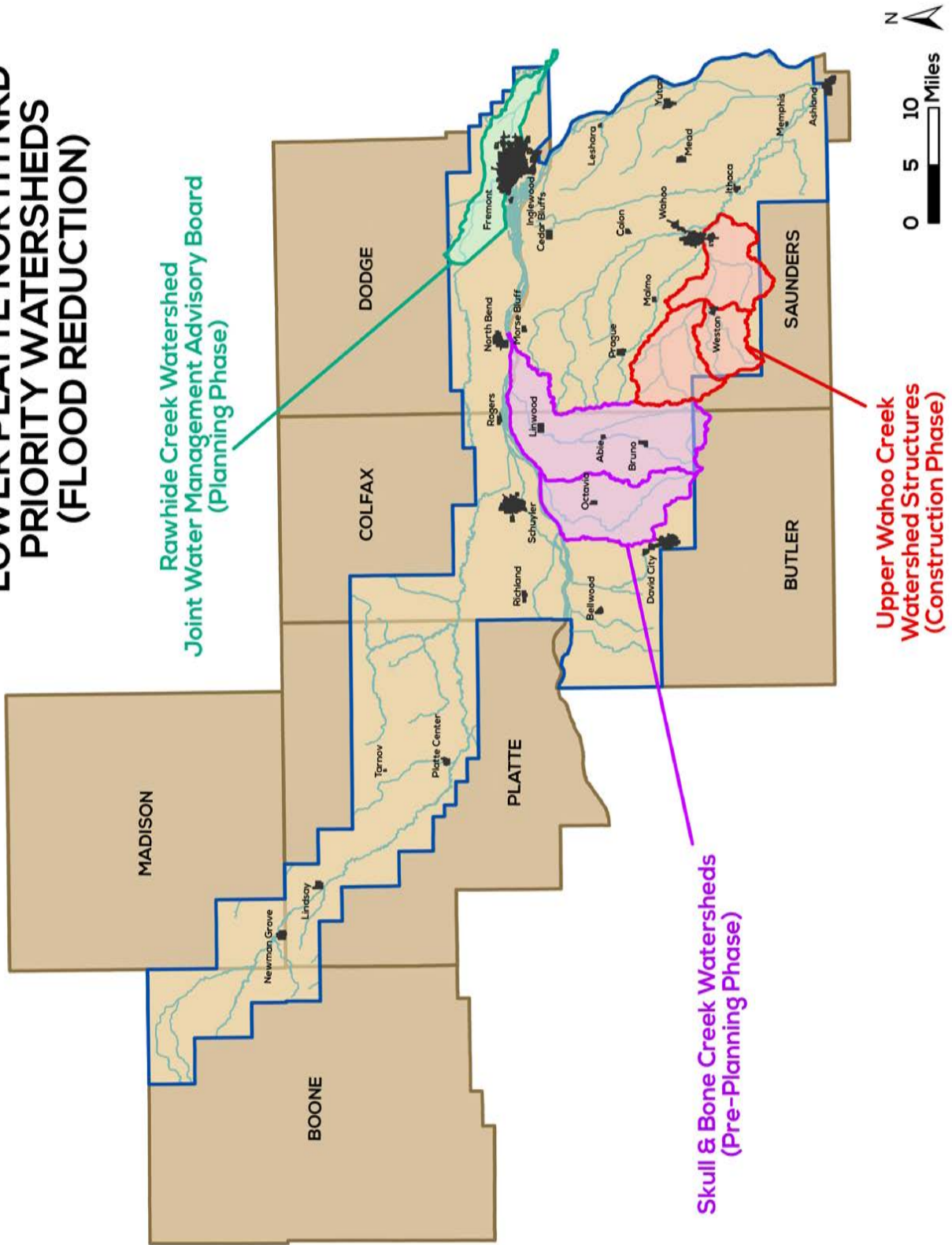
**LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD
GROUNDWATER ENERGY LEVEL NETWORK
(SPRING 2023)**







LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD PRIORITY WATERSHEDS (FLOOD REDUCTION)



APPENDIX G – Projected Budget Income, Fiscal Years 2024-2029



Description	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
AVAILABLE CASH (Sinking Funds, etc.)	\$304,410	\$812,848	\$869,898	\$913,392	\$959,062	\$1,007,015
FEDERAL INCOME						
NRCS (WFPO & RCPP)	\$499,610	\$3,500,000	\$5,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$0
FEMA (Stilling Basin)	\$2,709,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FEMA (Flood Funds)	\$392,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
NDEE (EPA 319)	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
State JEDI Funds	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$0
STATE INCOME						
NE Buffer Strip Program	\$52,000	\$54,000	\$56,000	\$58,000	\$60,000	\$0
Decommissioned Well Fund	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Natural Resource WQ Fund	\$52,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Shell Creek Implementation	\$43,829	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Water Sustainability Fund	\$133,031	\$500,075	\$500,075	\$500,075	\$0	\$0
Sand Creek - NRDF	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Lake Wanahoo Other	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Wild NE	\$3,820	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Motor Vehicle Prorate	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$8,400
OTHER INCOME						
Rural Water Income	\$134,000	\$140,000	\$143,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Property Tax	\$3,480,715	\$3,480,715	\$3,480,715	\$3,480,715	\$3,480,715	\$3,480,715
Investment Income	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Equipment, Rent, Parks, Salaries, Etc.	\$625,192	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Local Income	\$118,940	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000
TOTAL	\$9,928,547	\$11,539,038	\$15,078,088	\$12,118,582	\$9,666,177	\$5,654,130



APPENDIX H – Projected Budget Expenses, Fiscal Years 2024-2029

ADMINISTRATION						
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Bonds	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Dues & Memberships	\$39,000	\$40,000	\$41,000	\$43,000	\$44,000	\$45,000
Fees & Licenses	\$11,465	\$11,924	\$12,401	\$12,897	\$13,200	\$13,200
GIS	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Insurance	\$76,174	\$79,221	\$82,390	\$85,685	\$89,113	\$92,677
Interest Expense	\$	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Legal Notices	\$,812	\$2,925	\$3,042	\$3,163	\$3,290	\$3,421
Maintenance Contracts	\$5,356	\$5,570	\$5,793	\$6,025	\$6,266	\$6,516
Office Supply & Expense	\$12,276	\$12,767	\$13,278	\$13,809	\$14,361	\$14,936
Computer Supply & Expense	\$32,000	\$33,000	\$34,000	\$35,000	\$36,000	\$37,000
Postage	\$7,030	\$7,312	\$7,604	\$7,908	\$8,225	\$8,554
Professional Services	\$140,000	\$142,000	\$142,000	\$144,000	\$148,000	\$149,000
Rent Expense	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Support to Organizations	\$1,300	\$1,400	\$1,500	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600
Telephone	\$20,659	\$21,485	\$22,344	\$23,238	\$24,168	\$25,134
Utilities	\$9,194	\$9,561	\$9,944	\$10,342	\$10,755	\$11,185

INFORMATION & EDUCATION						
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Education	\$12,438	\$12,936	\$13,453	\$13,992	\$14,551	\$15,133
Information	\$32,394	\$33,690	\$35,037	\$36,439	\$37,896	\$39,412
Scholarships & Grants	\$3,245	\$3,375	\$3,510	\$3,650	\$3,796	\$3,948
Other	\$10,546	\$10,967	\$11,406	\$11,862	\$12,337	\$12,830

OPERATION & MAINTENANCE						
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Auto & Truck Expense	\$23,795	\$24,747	\$25,737	\$26,766	\$27,837	\$28,950
Building Maintenance	\$10,059	\$10,461	\$10,880	\$11,315	\$11,767	\$12,238
Community Forestry Program	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Operation & Maintenance	\$310,149	\$322,555	\$335,457	\$348,875	\$362,830	\$377,343
Project Repairs	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Stream Bank Stabilization	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Wildlife Habitat	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Other	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000

PERSONNEL						
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Directors Expense	\$41,858	\$43,532	\$45,274	\$47,084	\$48,968	\$50,927
Directors Per Diem	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000
Employee Benefits	\$500,781	\$520,812	\$541,645	\$563,310	\$585,843	\$609,276
Payroll Taxes	\$100,589	\$104,612	\$108,797	\$113,149	\$117,675	\$122,382
Personnel Expense	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Salaries	\$1,342,880	\$1,383,166	\$1,424,661	\$1,467,401	\$1,490,000	\$1,540,000

APPENDIX H – Projected Budget Expenses, Fiscal Years 2024-2029



PROJECTS

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Inter-governmental	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Special Projects	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Wanahoo	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Other Projects	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000

PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
WQ Monitoring	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000

WATER

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Groundwater Management Plan	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$65,000	\$70,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Groundwater Programs	\$195,932	\$203,769	\$211,920	\$220,397	\$229,213	\$238,381
Regulatory	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Surface Water Programs	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000
Special Projects	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Land Treatment	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000

RURAL WATER DISTRICT

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Rural Water District	\$150,580	\$156,604	\$162,868	\$169,382	\$176,158	\$183,204

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Wanahoo Stilling Basin & Oversight	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Wanahoo Improvements	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Wahoo Creek Dams	\$1,277,500	\$3,500,000	\$2,450,000	\$2,100,000	\$0	\$0
Land Rights (Wahoo Creek)	\$547,500	\$1,500,000	\$1,050,000	\$900,000	\$0	\$0
Fremont/Dodge County Drainage	\$440,000	\$440,000	\$440,000	\$440,000	\$440,000	\$0
Skull/Bone Creek	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
Cottonwood 21A Spillway	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Buildings	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Large Structure O&M Sinking Fund	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Flood Reduction Sinking Fund	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000

CAPITAL OUTLAY

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Capital Outlay	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

BUDGET TOTAL

	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
BUDGET TOTAL	\$8,514,111	\$11,804,990	\$10,370,038	\$9,929,389	\$7,029,947	\$5,189,749



Five Television Channels

Since we signed on the air in 1954 with our first television channel, we've told stories from farmers' fields, the downtown coffee shop and city streets. Our work is essential – and possible because of support from our business partners and members.

Nebraska Public Media

Watch nine hours of PBS KIDS educational programming each weekday, plus PBS programs such as *Masterpiece*, *NOVA*, *NATURE*, *Antiques Roadshow* and *PBS NewsHour* during primetime. This channel also includes local favorites like *Big Red Wrap-Up*, *Nebraska Stories* and *Backyard Farmer*, plus high school and collegiate sports coverage, and award-winning local news and documentaries.

World

Our World channel informs and inspires with real stories. Watch PBS documentaries, news and public affairs programming, plus live gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Nebraska Legislature and other venues including the Governor's Hearing Room and the Supreme and Appellate Courts.

Create

Our Create channel inspires home-improvement buffs, feeds food fans and takes viewers around the world with travel programming. Watch gardening and arts and crafts programming, as well as programs dedicated to improving health and well-being.

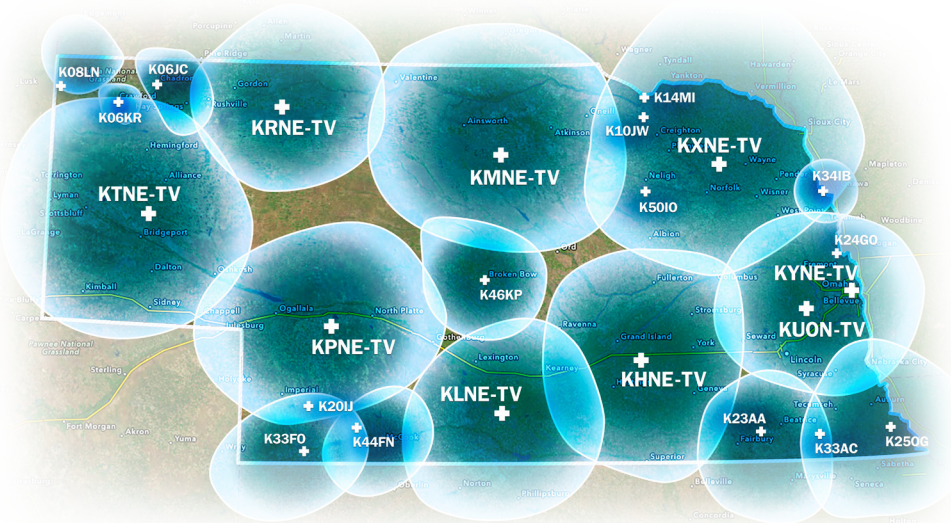
PBS KIDS

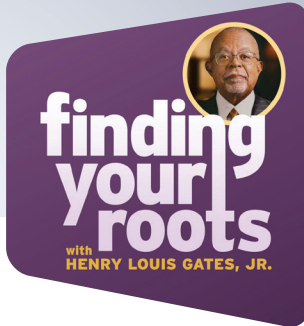
PBS KIDS programs broadcast 24/7, including primetime hours when families watch TV together. *(No underwriting opportunities available at this time.)*

FNX|First Nations Experience

FNX is the first and only national broadcast television network exclusively devoted to Native American and World Indigenous content. *(No underwriting opportunities available at this time.)*

Television Coverage Map
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Television Rate Schedule

:30 spots Minimum \$1,500 Buy

Monday – Friday, Sunday	6:00 am – 3:00 pm 5:00 am – 10:30 am	Children’s Programming	\$30 per :30 spot
Monday – Friday	3:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Early Fringe	\$40 per :30 spot
Monday – Sunday	6:00 pm – 11:00 pm	Primetime	\$60 per :30 spot
Saturday	6:00 am – 6:00 pm	Saturday Morning/Daytime	\$50 per :30 spot
Sunday	10:30 am – 6:00 pm	Sunday Morning/Daytime	\$50 per :30 spot



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 (3) spots across all classes (A, B, C)
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High School Volleyball Championships Pkg **\$3,000**
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High School Wrestling Championships Package **\$1,000**
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 Event Date: Sat 2/17/24



High School Swimming & Diving Championships Pkg **\$1,500**
 (3) spots across event
 Event Date: Sat 2/24/24

High School Girls Basketball Championships Pkg **\$3,000**
 (6) spots across all classes (A,B, C1, D1, C2, D2)
 Event Date: Fri 3/2/24



High School Boys Basketball Championships Pkg **\$3,000**
 (6) spots across all classes (A, B, C1, D1, C2, D2)
 Event Date: Sat 3/9/24

High School Boys Baseball **\$1,500**
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 Event Date: Sat 5/11/24 and Tues 5/14/24



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