

CENTRAL PLATTE NRD

Board Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: Vice-Chairman Jerry Wiese called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. He reported that the NRD abides by the Open Meetings Act in conducting business and said that a copy of the Open Meetings Act was displayed on the south wall of the conference room, that the Board reserves the right to change the order of an item on the agenda, and some items on the agenda are subject to closed session.

ATTENDANCE: Board members present were:

Lon Bohn	Dwayne Margritz	Jay Richeson
Alicia Haussler	Charles Maser	Deb VanMatre
Ryan Kegley	Jerry Milner	Jerry Wiese
Ed Kyes	Keith Ostermeier	

Excused Absences: Tom Downey, Brian Keiser, Barry Obermiller, Doug Reeves, Marvion Reichert, Mick Reynolds, Steve Sheen, Ed Stoltenberg and Mike Wilkens

Staff present: Lyndon Vogt – General Manager, Kelly Cole – Administrative Assistant, Marcia-Lee – Information/Education Specialist, Luke Zakrzewski – GIS Image Analyst, Dean Krull – UNL/CPNRD Demo Project Coordinator, Brody Vorderstrasse – Communications Assistant, Courtney Widup – Water Resources Technician, Dan Clement – Water Resources Specialist, Brandi Flyn – Hydrologist, Jesse Mintken – Assistant Manager and Tricia Dudley – Water Quality Specialist.

Others present: Joe Krolikowski – NRCS District Conservationist and Janelle Taubenheim – NRCS Resources Conservationist Buffalo County

MEETING NOTICES: Vice-Chairman Wiese reported that the notices of the meeting had been published in the Grand Island Independent and the news release was provided to other media outlets in the District.

MEETING MINUTES: Alicia Haussler made the motion to approve the March board meeting minutes. Dwayne Margritz seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS: Vice-Chairman Wiese asked if there were any announcements or suggestions for future meetings. There was none.

PUBLIC FORUM: Vice-Chairman Wiese asked if anyone wanted to address the board on any item not included on the agenda. There was none.

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Vice-Chairman Wiese reported that Tom Downey, Brian Keiser, Barry Obermiller, Doug Reeves, Marvion Reichert, Mick Reynolds, Steve Sheen,

Ed Stoltenberg and Mike Wilkens requested to be excused from the board meeting.

Alicia Haussler made the motion to approve the absences as requested. Jay Richeson seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

NRCS REPORT: Janelle Taubenheim, NRCS Buffalo County Resource Conservationist reported on current employees in Buffalo County and the EQIP contracts they are working on (see enclosed).

Joe Krolikowski, NRCS District Conservationist, reviewed the NRCS Strategic 5-year plan (see enclosed).

EASTERN PROJECTS COMMITTEE: Ed Kyes, acting chairman, reported that the Eastern Projects Committee met earlier that day.

Kyes reported that the committee reviewed the proposed Fiscal 2024 budget and moved it onto the Budget Committee.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Keith Ostermeier, chairman, reported that the committee looked at two bids for a private water well at the potential new Education/Office Building. The committee recommended the low bid from Downey Drilling in the amount of \$71,839.50.

Keith Ostermeier made a motion to approve the bid for a private water well at the potential new Education/Office building from Downey Drilling in the amount of \$71,839.50. Deb VanMatre seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

WESTERN PROJECTS COMMITTEE: Ryan Kegley, acting chairman, reported that the committee met earlier that day.

Kegley reported that the committee reviewed the proposed fiscal 2024 budget and moved it onto the Budget Committee.

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE: Alicia Haussler, acting chairman, reported that the committee met earlier that day.

Haussler reported that the committee reviewed the Cost Share and Information/Education proposed fiscal 2024 budgets and moved them onto the Budget Committee.

Haussler reported that the committee reviewed the scholarship applications that were received for the Ron Bishop Memorial Scholarship. The applicants meet all the requirements.

Alicia Haussler made a motion to approve 5 Ron Bishop Memorial Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to Emma Ziemba of Kearney, Dawson Kosmicki of Cairo, Ty Swanson of Wood River, Madelyn Graham of Grand Island and MacKenzie Smith of Kearney. Keith Ostermeier seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

SEARCH COMMITTEE: Vice-chairman Wiese appointed the following board members to sit on a search committee to replace the late LeRoy Arends in Sub-District 8: Keith Ostermeier, Alicia Haussler, Charles Maser, Mick Reynolds and Jerry Milner.

The Search Committee will set up interviews prior to the next board meeting for those individuals interested in serving on the board and bring a recommendation back to the board.

GROUNDWATER QUALITY VIOLATION REPORT: Tricia Dudley, Water Quality Specialist, reported that 61 producers are still out of compliance with the Nitrogen Groundwater Management Program. Dudley is requesting we issue Cease & Desist orders to those 61 producers.

Alicia Haussler made a motion to issue Cease & Desist orders to the following 61 producers that are out of compliance with the Nitrogen Groundwater Management Program: Dawson Feeders, Joel Anderson, Randy Bankson, David Beck, Kyle Beck, Ritch Blythe, Anthony Bohaty, Kane Brandes, Kent Brown, Adam Clausen, Kenneth Clausen, Jeff Earnest, Travis Fagan, Ben Friedrichsen, Randy Grossnicklaus, Wade Hartman, Brandon Hegge, Gary Hillmer, Craig Huxtable, Greg Keller, Aaron Kimle, Greg Kobza, Alvin Kowalski III, Anthony Kreikmeier, Marc Kroll, Richard & Dan Leisinger, Sam Lorenzen, Steven Lorenzen, Bret Mader, Phil Mader, Fred Maloley, Aaron Micek, Morgan Miller, Cody Morris, Dale Morris, Tom Nelson, Michael Panowicz, Ben Peters, Dennis Pouk, Larry Rachow, Travis Rainforth, Chad Rathman, Earl & Levi Reyner, Merle & Barb Riege, Alan Rieker, Barton Robinson, Gavin & Grant Robinson, Carl Schroer, James Shiers, Duane Skrdlant, William Soll, David Stade, William & Arlo Stevens, Mike Stoppkotte, Jerron Suck, John Thorp, Trace Tool, Todd VanHousen, Tim Williams, Thad Ziemba and Dyrek Zoucha. Keith Ostermeier seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

IRRIGATION VIOLATION UPDATE: Luke Zakrzewski, GIS Image Analyst, reported that since the 56 letters that were sent out in February, 36 are completed, 8 we are waiting for the paperwork and 12 of them we still need to get paperwork out too.

GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN: Courtney Widup, Water Resources Technician, reviewed the major proposed changes in the Groundwater Management Plan. The major changes are as follows: 1) Water Quantity Phase I trigger will change to a range of 0-25% of the Maximum Acceptable Decline (MAD). Phase II would apply to any area with declines greater than 25% of the MAD. Phase III would be changed to 50%

decline in water levels relative to the MADs. If water levels in a given GWMA continued to decline and reached 75% of the MAD, the GWMA would be at a Phase IV level. A Phase V designation would be implemented if that MAD is 100% reached or exceeded. 2) The preferred option for groundwater quantity management controls related to each phase is measuring devices and a limit on the volume of groundwater pumped. Phase I has no additional management requirements. Phase II remains as is with limitations on transfers and supplemental wells. When the Phase III trigger is reached, measurement devices will be required on all active irrigation wells in the GWMA, and the owner or operator of every active well will be required to report annual water usage to the CPNRD. At the Phase IV trigger, CPNRD would allocate groundwater use to prevent the GWMA from reaching the MAD. If the initial allocation is insufficient to prevent reaching the MAD, and that MAD is reached or exceeded, this would trigger a Phase V designation, requiring a reduction of the allocation. 3) Ground Water Management Areas 7 and 9 were subdivided due to differences in irrigation development that have occurred across those GWMA's. 4) Water Quality Phase III trigger will be lowered to 10.1 ppm nitrate. Phase I remains 0-7.5 ppm, Phase II will be 7.6 to 10.0 ppm and Phase III will be 10.1 ppm and above. Phase IV remains an area where nitrate concentrations are not decreasing.

Jay Richeson made a motion to approve the proposed changes in the Groundwater Management Plan for hearing purposes. Keith Ostermeier seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

Jay Richeson made a motion to set a Public Hearing on May 25, 2023, at 1:45 pm just prior to the May Board meeting for the changes to the Groundwater Management Plan. Deb VanMatre seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Lyndon Vogt, General Manager, reported that a motion was filed to bypass the Court of Appeals to take the appeal directly to the Nebraska Supreme Court for the Platte Republican Diversion and on April 17, 2023, the petition was granted.

Vogt reported that CPNRD is currently working with UNL on a grant to share the cost of an agronomist to work with Dean Krull, UNL/CPNRD Demonstration Project Coordinator. A draft statement of work, provided by the USDA, that will provide 50% cost share for 3 years has been received.

The NRD is also working with the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture and Tri-Basin NRD on a grant to share an additional agronomist position. The shared position would promote and assist in voluntary enrollment in Farm Bill Conservation Programs.

COST SHARE PROGRAMS: Transfer & Applications - Kelly Cole, Administrative Assistant, requested a transfer of \$11,300 from Flow Meter and increasing Trees by \$1,300 and Burn Preparation by \$10,000 and reported that we have received cost share applications for the following programs: Burn Preparation, Sensor Based Management of

Fertigation, Flow Meter, Tree Planting and Well Decommissioning (see enclosed). She said the applicants are in compliance with the District's rules and regulations, funds are available, and she recommended they be approved.

Alicia Haussler made the motion to approve the cost share transfer and applications as reported. Ryan Kegley seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor except Lon Bohn who abstained. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Lyndon Vogt, General Manager, reviewed the April financial report.

Alicia Haussler made a motion to approve the April financial report as presented. Keith Ostermeier seconded the motion. All board members present, voting by roll call vote, were in favor. Motion carried.

NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCES DISTRICT: No Report

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION: Lyndon Vogt, General Manager, reviewed the report provided by Mick Reynolds. The department received requests for 14 small projects, totaling \$2.36 million, 4 large projects totaling \$13 million and 1 CSO (Omaha – combined sewer overflow) project that automatically gets 10% of the appropriation. The commission will get an \$11 million appropriation and \$2.1 million coming back from project closeouts. For the \$11 million appropriation, the commission has the following funding obligations: \$3.623 million to fully fund a project approved last year, \$1.08 million to the CSO, \$1.08 million to small projects and \$5.3 million to large projects.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Vice-Chairman Wiese reviewed the upcoming events.
Next Board Meeting – Scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday, May 25. Details to follow.

OTHER BUSINESS: There was none.

ADJOURN: Vice-Chairman Wiese adjourned the board meeting at 2:55 p.m.

KEARNEY FO UPDATE

APRIL 2023



NEW EMPLOYEES

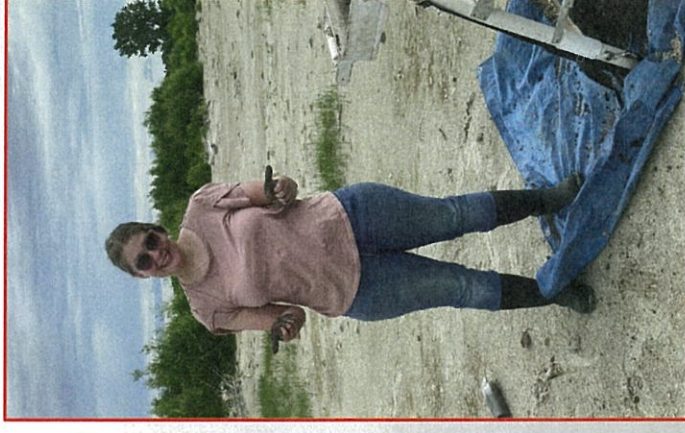
AUGIE RUVALCABA

- SOIL CONSERVATION TECH
- DEGREE: BIOLOGY WITH WILDLIFE EMPHASIS FROM UNK
- WORKED AS A FOREST RANGER FOR US FOREST SERVICE



MICHAELA BUCHLI

- STUDENT INTERN SINCE LAST SUMMER
- GRADUATES FROM UNK THIS SPRING WITH AGRICULTURE BUSINESS DEGREE
- WILL WORK IN CLAY CENTER FOR NRCS AFTER GRADUATION



KEARNEY EQIP & RCPP OBLIGATIONS

- **URBAN AG – 3 EQIP**
- **PIVOTS- 1 EQIP 1 RCPP**
- **SDI – 4 EQIP 1 RCPP**
- **WETLAND RESTORATION – 1 EQIP**
- **GRAZING IMPROVEMENTS – 7 EQIP**
- **RANGE PLANTINGS- 1 EQIP**
- **COVER CROPS – 2 RCPP**

- ***THIS INCLUDES 4 LLNRD CONTRACTS
KEARNEY FO ADMINISTERS***

URBAN AG - UPDATES

ENGINEERING PRACTICES	3
317 - Composting Facility.....	3
430 - Irrigation Pipeline.....	5
436 - Irrigation Reservoir.....	7
441 - Irrigation System, Micro-Irrigation.....	8
516 - Livestock Pipeline.....	9
558 - Roof Runoff Structure.....	10
570 - Stormwater Runoff Control.....	11
575 - Trails and Walkways.....	12
636 - Water Harvesting Catchment.....	13
ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES PRACTICES	15
314 - Brush Management.....	15
315 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment.....	17
325 - High Tunnel System.....	18
327 - Conservation Cover.....	21
328 - Conservation Crop Rotation.....	23
329 - Residue and Tillage Management, No Till.....	25
340 - Cover Crop.....	27
342 - Critical Area Planting.....	30
380 - Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation.....	32
386 - Field Border.....	33
420 - Wildlife Habitat Planting.....	34
490 - Tree/Shrub Site Preparation.....	36
512 - Pasture and Hay Planting.....	37
528 - Prescribed Grazing.....	38
590 - Nutrient Management.....	40
595 - Pest Management Conservation System.....	43
612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment.....	45
660 - Tree/Shrub Pruning.....	46
808 - Soil Carbon Amendment.....	47
812 - Raised Beds.....	49
821 - Low Tunnel Systems.....	52

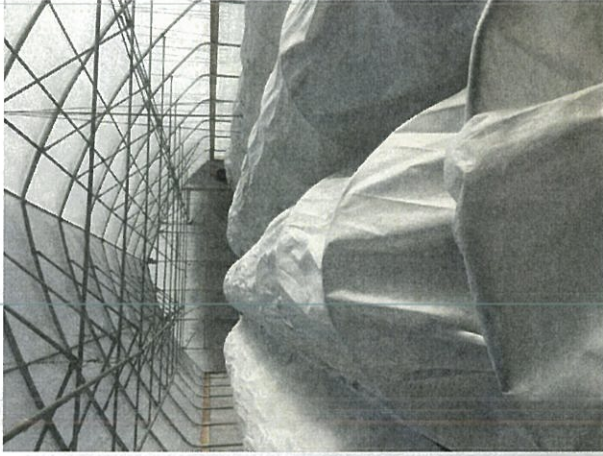
2023 – EQUIP CONTRACT



LOW TUNNELS – FROST BLANKETS-SUN SHADE- INSECT NETTING



BENEFIT OF LOW TUNNEL





Natural Resources Conservation Service
Grand Island Field Office
703 S. Webb Rd., Suite B
Grand Island, NE 68803
Phone (308) 395-8586 (Ext. 3)

<http://www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov>

April 24, 2023

Central Platte NRD
215 North Kaufman Avenue
Grand Island, NE 68803

April Report to CPNRD

Please find attached the Nebraska Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Strategic Plan for FY 2023 to 2028. Our Nebraska NRCS Leadership Team recently shared this 5-year strategic plan with the employees. Through a multi-month process the Leadership Team worked to gather valued input from the employees and partners to update and build this plan.

The strategic plan lists our mission, our vision, and the 4 goals which will serve as guidelines during the conservation journey. The 5-year plan is a living document which means it can be changed, adjusted, or updated during this time frame if resource conservation needs change.

Please take some time to read through this document, our State Conservationist Rob Lawson and the leadership are open to continuing dialog and partnership actions in the stewardship of Nebraska lands.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Joe Krolikowski

Joe Krolikowski
District Conservationist

Attachments: NE Strategic Plan - FY2023-FY2028

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service



5

YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Years 2023-2027

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Nebraska

A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE CONSERVATIONIST

Welcome to the Nebraska five-year (FY2023-FY2027) Strategic Plan. I invite you to learn more about the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). As our mission suggests, “we deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.”

Here in Nebraska, as elsewhere, the opportunities and challenges related to agricultural landscapes are rapidly evolving. Nevertheless, our vision in this beautiful state remains resolute, that being – “we promote productive and healthy landscapes across Nebraska through voluntary conservation of natural resources.” In order to realize this vision, we have identified four goals which will serve as guideposts in our conservation journey: (1) Support productive agriculture lands in Nebraska through addressing priority resource concerns, (2) Attract, engage, and retain an effective and motivated workforce proud to represent Nebraska NRCS, (3) Build and utilize a conservation delivery system essential for Nebraska, and (4) Engage effectively with partners and customers to achieve conservation outcomes for Nebraska.

Importantly though, we understand that this five-year plan reflects a “living” document. As a result, we are taking steps to develop strategic business plans to guide day-to-day operations and priorities. Additionally, in the objectives and

strategies listed herein, we have purposefully attempted to balance clarity in direction with flexibility in response to allow our valued customers, staff, and partners to weigh in with innovative solutions to Nebraska’s resource conservation needs. We have identified prospective tactics that Nebraska NRCS might apply per each strategy but I, and the rest of the Nebraska Leadership Team, humbly invite your comments and suggestions regarding the most effective and timely actions we might take together in support of this Plan.

In sum, we look forward to continuing the dialog and partnership in action with you in service of Nebraska land stewardship.

Signed,
Robert Lawson
Nebraska NRCS State Conservationist



Mission

We deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.

Vision

We promote productive and healthy landscapes across Nebraska through voluntary conservation of natural resources.

Strategic Goal *One*:

Support productive agriculture lands in Nebraska through addressing priority resource concerns.

- ***Objective 1 - Improve surface and groundwater quality and quantity.***

Strategy 1

Focus on priority watersheds.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) build staff capacity employed on priority watersheds, (b) prioritize yearly funding for projects in impaired watersheds, (c) address flood prevention requirements.

Strategy 2

Improve irrigation efficiency.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) focus on acres treated statewide, (b) drive increase in irrigation water management - practice code CP 449, (c) facilitate adoption of existing technologies that can improve irrigation efficiency, (d) schedule outreach events for producers with irrigated land to educate them on the importance of water conservation practices.

Strategy 3

Support emerging technologies to improve water use.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) increase overall number of new technologies supported by Nebraska NRCS, (b) adopt or demonstrate at least one new technology per year, (c) enhance partnerships with Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) and other cooperators who apply these technologies.

Strategy 4

Develop outreach campaign to small- and medium-sized animal feeding operations (AFO).

- Prospective Tactics – (a) create campaign related to surface and groundwater quality and quantity specifically focused on AFO concerns, (b) increase number of AFOs reached across state, (c) increase number of resulting applications for AFO assistance.

Strategy 5

Focus on impairments (e.g., atrazine, e. coli, and nitrates).

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number and variety of practices applied that address impairments, (b) engage with the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy to identify appropriate metrics.

Strategic Goal *One*:

Support productive agriculture lands in Nebraska through addressing priority resource concerns.

- ***Objective 2 - Improve grassland health and productivity to reduce limitations to livestock production.***

Strategy 1

Emphasize reduction of woody encroachment on grazing lands.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor acres of progress against Rangeland Analysis Platform, (b) allocate 10 percent more funds to brush management and prescribed fire, (c) refine (along with partners) a determination on where to spend resources most effectively/efficiently, (d) reduce woody encroachment on grazing lands (within Great Plains Grassland Initiative – GPGL – areas increase treated acres).

Strategy 2

Emphasize the importance of prescribed grazing management plans.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) enhance efforts to communicate content/importance of prescribed grazing management plans, (b) increase acres of practice code 528.



Strategic Goal *One*:

Support productive agriculture lands in Nebraska through addressing priority resource concerns.

- ***Objective 3 - Improve soil health.***

Strategy 1

Implement Nebraska Soil Health Strategic Plan.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) highlight specific objectives in the Soil Health Strategic Plan, and their relevance, (b) monitor the percent of Soil Health Plan objectives met in Nebraska.

Strategy 2

Promote soil health management systems within conservation planning process.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) conduct information sessions on soil health management, (b) identify more real-world examples of what constitutes a soil health management system (and standards by which evaluated), (c) identify and promote quality criteria for soil health, (d) standardize use of soil health field assessment tool to evaluate alternative conservation practices.

Strategy 3

Implement practices to reduce wind and water erosion.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of acres treated, (b) eliminate eligibility rules related to cover crops (e.g., do not make producers ineligible for cost-share on this practice simply because a field had cover crops planted).



Strategic Goal *One*:

Support productive agriculture lands in Nebraska through addressing priority resource concerns.

- ***Objective 4 - Enhance habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species.***

Strategy 1

Promote terrestrial wildlife and invertebrates in the conservation planning process.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of practices/acres planned that address wildlife and invertebrates, (b) engage with partners to increase planning for wildlife, (c) identify proactive strategies to increase wildlife benefit (e.g., provide cost-share only for planting native species or requiring a minimum of 10 percent forbs on a seeding), (d) promote edge of field practices that benefit terrestrial wildlife in all conservation programs, (e) assign an acre goal to each Natural Resources District for practices that benefit terrestrial wildlife.

Strategy 2

Implement conservation practices to address the habitat needs for prioritized and at-risk species.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of practices/acres planned that address prioritized and at-risk species, (b) engage with partners to increase planning for wildlife, (c) identify proactive strategies to increase wildlife benefit that address habitat needs for prioritized and at-risk species.



Strategic goal *Two:*

Attract, engage, and retain an effective and motivated workforce proud to represent Nebraska NRCS.

- ***Objective 1 - Expand and diversify NRCS recruiting pipeline.***

Strategy 1

Increase NRCS participation/effectiveness at a variety of recruiting events.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of both overall/new events, (b) promote NRCS through College Career Fairs, (c) prioritize high schools to educate prospective college students about NRCS and applicable college destinations/majors, (d) refine recruiting process where it can be made more effective/efficient.

Strategy 2

Build relationships on key sources/influencers of workforce talent.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number and quality of source/influencer relationships, (b) create and apply crisp “elevator speech” focusing on “Why NRCS?” (c) leverage social media, as appropriate.

Strategy 3

Engage Nebraska NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee to identify sources of talent.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of actionable recommendations from Civil Rights Advisory Committee, (b) identify and publicize successful talent sourcing.



Strategic goal *Two*:

Attract, engage, and retain an effective and motivated workforce proud to represent Nebraska NRCS.

- ***Objective 2 – Hire qualified, diverse candidates.***

Strategy 1

Leverage national recruiting tools.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of permanent staff on-boarded, (b) leverage Federal Pathways Program, recent graduates, Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) or merit, Hire Now, USDA 1890 National Scholars Program, and national NRCS video series for recruiting, (c) explain contractor process to staff as means to hire talented Soil Conservation Technicians and Civil Engineering Technicians.

Strategy 2

Encourage Nebraska NRCS personnel at all levels to be directly involved in recruiting.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of/percentage time staff engaged in recruiting, (b) equip staff with tools and appropriate information to tell the “NRCS story.”

Strategy 3

Identify/apply other innovative strategies to refine and enhance our recruiting process.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor number of innovative strategies identified/applied, (b) benchmark best practices from across NRCS and other government, commercial sources.



Strategic goal *Two*:

Attract, engage, and retain an effective and motivated workforce proud to represent Nebraska NRCS.

- ***Objective 3 - Inspire and support our employees to accomplish Agency mission.***

Strategy 1

Promote employee recognition.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor percent use of available award/recognition pool, (b) identify and highlight employee success stories, (c) emphasize performance awards where appropriate.

Strategy 2

Develop and implement targeted training.

- Prospective – (a) monitor percent staff receiving targeted training discussions with their supervisor each year, (b) District Conservationists monitor creation/use of targeted training plan for each staff, (c) renew/improve knowledge of Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) as primary assessment tool at all levels of Nebraska NRCS.

Strategy 3

Prioritize one-on-one mentoring relationships.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor staff mentoring participation rate, (b) prioritize staff mentoring available with experienced employees from job day 1, (c) continue and enhance New Conservation Planner Conversations.

Strategy 4

Support professional development throughout Nebraska NRCS.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor staff participation rate in relevant professional activities, (b) encourage use of volunteering or job shadowing to expand work-related knowledge/skills/abilities, (c) encourage participation in Cultivating Future Leaders (CFL), state-wide committees, work details, and other forms of career mobility.

Strategic goal *Two*:

Attract, engage, and retain an effective and motivated workforce proud to represent Nebraska NRCS.

- ***Objective 4 - Implement an HR support structure for Nebraska NRCS.***

Strategy 1

Foster timely and transparent personnel actions.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor percent of timely actions against HR service tickets, (b) identify/implement quality control mechanism to achieve timeliness, (c) appoint designated point of contact to assist staff with USA Jobs, Employee Care Center, other, (d) focus on actions (e.g., career ladder promotions, students arriving as interns, name changes, etc.) that Nebraska NRCS controls.

Strategy 2

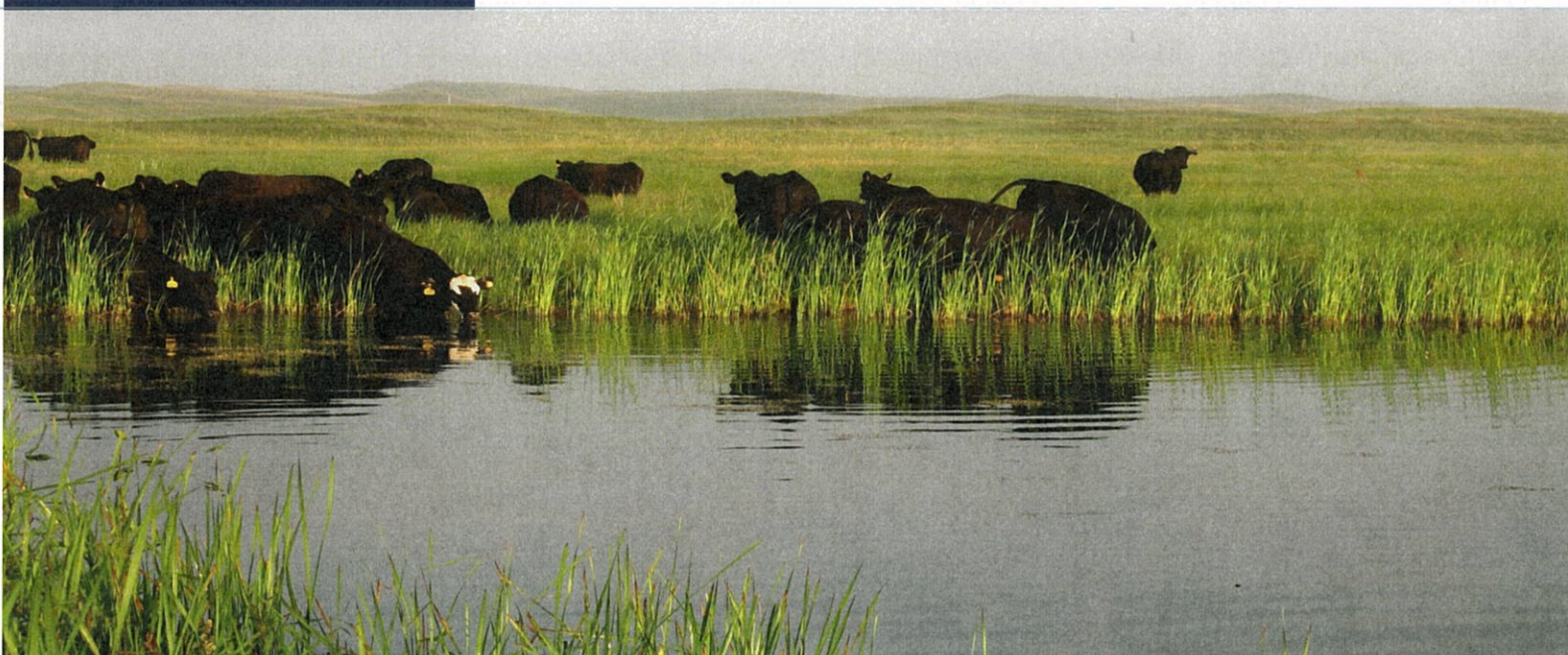
Streamline administrative on-boarding process.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) leverage a staff working group to identify and implement on-boarding process efficiencies, (b) create and present PowerPoint on refined process before on-boarding class.

Strategy 3

Educate employees on how to self-serve on certain HR topics.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) monitor percent use of HR self-serve, (b) focus especially on items such as Thrift Savings Plan, life insurance, health savings accounts, etc., (c) leverage Employee Care Center (ECC).



Strategic goal *Two:*

Attract, engage, and retain an effective and motivated workforce proud to represent Nebraska NRCS.

- ***Objective 5 - Maximize employee retention.***

Strategy 1

Evaluate root causes and trends related to employee satisfaction.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) routinely evaluate and act upon Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results, (b) ensure exit interviews are conducted and analyzed, (c) prioritize leadership listening sessions/Town Halls state-wide, (d) create/conduct Nebraska NRCS specific surveys (including 360-degree feedback) as appropriate.

Strategy 2

Emphasize and support work/life balance.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) provide training related to time management, (b) engage staff, as appropriate, on hybrid work arrangements, (c) identify definitions of various work schedule items/options, (d) hold annual Leadership Team discussion to refine/enhance approach.

Strategy 3

Prioritize wellness/safety for our staff.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) actively promote National Wellness and Employee Assistance Programs, (b) ensure all offices are equipped with functional security devices, locked doors, and automated external defibrillators.



Strategic Goal *Three*:

Build and utilize a conservation delivery system essential for Nebraska.

- **Objective 1 - Ensure technical assistance delivery is relevant.**

Strategy 1

Establish a conservation delivery system for district conservationists to manage and coordinate.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) survey and/or otherwise identify customer needs, (b) ensure District Conservationists identify and understand staff customer-focused skills, (c) offer customer skills training across the state, (d) monitor customer interactions.

Strategy 2

Develop a conservation delivery system based on a state-wide scientific priority.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) leverage science-related lessons learned from Great Plains Grassland Initiative (GPGI), (b) convene technical team to generalize GPGI framework for priority resource concerns, (c) encourage state conservation specialists (e.g., wildlife biologist, agronomist, rangeland specialist) to review relevant literature regularly and send reviews/updates to all staff.

Strategy 3

Improve knowledge use of emerging agriculture industry technology.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) Conduct a state-wide inventory, (b) evaluate Nebraska NRCS role and staffing needs, (c) create specializations and dedicated support where appropriate, (d) prioritize training.

Strategy 4

Assess existing NRCS planning and implementation tools.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) Conduct a state-wide inventory, (b) evaluate Nebraska NRCS needs (e.g., portable iPads with large screens to share with landowners), (c) rethink how Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) is/should be used for programs.

Strategic Goal *Three*:

Build and utilize a conservation delivery system essential for Nebraska.

- ***Objective 2 – Enhance customer service delivery and support system.***

Strategy 1

Conduct analysis of current organizational structures.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) conduct analysis to include staff position types, disciplines, locations, and reporting elements – to include both NRCS permanent staff and contractors, (b) complete provisional study by end of FY23 (and then ongoing).

Strategy 2

Develop FTE staffing analysis tool for each supervisor work unit.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) establish work-group to determine what will go in staffing analysis tool – initial prototype by end FY23, (b) utilize dashboard information (e.g., program applications, as feasible), (c) leverage National Staffing Distribution Model, as feasible.

Strategy 3

Project future Field Office space needs and design.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) subordinate to strategies 1 and 2, but start work concurrently (provisional results end of FY23 with 10–15-year analysis time frame), (b) feed results into broader study in Strategy 1 (c) keep field offices actively involved in process.



Strategic Goal *Three*:

Build and utilize a conservation delivery system essential for Nebraska.

- **Objective 3 - Optimize technical and financial assistance implementation.**

Strategy 1

Create and coordinate the conservation program knowledge of benefits and technical/financial programs.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) create refined communications campaign related to technical/program benefits and requirements, (b) create pre-made economic analyses of practices and lesser-known practices like high tunnels to distribute so potential customers can see economic benefits at a glance, (c) highlight implications of cost lists lasting more than one year, (d) monitor number of customers reached, other survey responses.

Strategy 2

Facilitate the financial and operational program requirements that organizations can use.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) evaluate documentation requirements controlled within the state, (b) make requirement changes, where feasible, to increase efficiency, (c) identify and apply innovative tools/apps, as feasible.

Strategy 3

Provide financial assistance program training to partners.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) create/refine training, (b) monitor number of partners reached, other survey responses.

Strategy 4

Ensure conservation compliance efficiency

- Prospective Tactics – (a) evaluate current processes, (b) pay particular attention to issues of timeliness and deadlines, (c) understand and evaluate capacity of compliance teams to expand focus (e.g., might include highly erodible land conservation (HELC) and wetland conservation (WC) compliance).

Strategic goal *Four*:

Engage effectively with partners and customers to achieve conservation outcomes for Nebraska.

- ***Objective 1 - Build and maintain relationships with key partners/producer organizations based on mutually beneficial outcomes.***

Strategy 1

Evaluate needs related to partnerships in addressing priority resource concerns.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) place focus where Nebraska NRCS can add capacity to achieve conservation, (b) complete study by end FY23, (c) prioritize outreach to non-traditional partners.

Strategy 2

Increase participation in local work group meetings where appropriate.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) assess current levels of participation, (b) identify what (and where) missing, (c) identify and apply tools to assist District Conservationists.

Strategy 3

Update/revise Nebraska Resource Assessment (NERA).

- Prospective Tactics – (a) focus on updating the Nebraska Resource Assessment to present day data, (b) determine what else is needed according to State Food and Agricultural Council, (c) update NERA as appropriate by end FY23.



Strategic goal *Four*:

Engage effectively with partners and customers to achieve conservation outcomes for Nebraska.

- ***Objective 2 - Implement seamless delivery of NRCS and partner funding sources.***

Strategy 1

Utilize agreements with partners to increase NRCS capacity.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) focus on use of agreements, (b) search for more flexibility for part-time or seasonal help, (c) find and take advantage of flexibility in sharing office space.

Strategy 2

Ensure Nebraska NRCS program application review teams include representatives from field, area, and state levels.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) identify representatives from each of the three levels, (b) monitor review team selection and participation across all three groups.

Strategy 3

Develop and apply principles for effective collaboration.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) emphasize clear accountabilities for all partner organizations on collaborative projects, (b) communicate and engage around resulting principles.

Strategic goal *Four*:

Engage effectively with partners and customers to achieve conservation outcomes for Nebraska.

- ***Objective 3 - Continue advocating for responsible management of our natural resources.***

Strategy 1

Renew/enhance efforts at outreach and education.


- Prospective Tactics – (a) Identify and publicize conservation success stories across the state, (b) create and apply crisp “elevator speech” focusing on “Why responsible management of natural resources?” (c) target and reach different age/education groups (including K-12, Future Farmers of America (FFA) groups), (d) prioritize historically underrepresented groups for outreach (look at compiled data), (e) encourage more pasture walks, field days, tours, activities that bring neighbors together that includes partners to discuss conservation and success stories.

Strategy 2

Encourage more absentee landowners to be responsible stewards of their land.

- Prospective Tactics – (a) Inventory absentee landowners across the state, (b) engage with them, as feasible, (c) monitor resulting stewardship activities.





“Out of the long list of nature’s gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil.”

Hugh Hammond Bennett, First NRCS Chief

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Requesting Transfer of Funds:
\$11,300 from Flow Meter
to \$1,300 Trees and \$10,000 Burn Preparation

CENTRAL PLATTE NRD
Cost Share
Thursday, April 27, 2023

BURN PREPARATION COST SHARE PROGRAM	\$	10,000.00
Tom Babel – Hamilton	\$	10,000.00
SENSOR BASED MANAGEMENT OF FERTIGATION COST SHARE.....	\$	1,430.00
Lonnie Bohn – Buffalo	\$	1,430.00
FLOW METER COST SHARE PROGRAM	\$	800.00
Douglas Retzlaff – Merrick	\$	800.00
TREE PLANTING COST SHARE PROGRAM	\$	1,294.05
Bayer Western Production Co LLC – Buffalo	\$	1,294.05
WELL DECOMMISSIONING COST SHARE PROGRAM	\$	750.00
Arthur Runge – Polk	\$	750.00
Total	\$	14,274.05