

January 28, 2021

## PRESS RELEASE

### New Officers and Directors on Central Platte NRD Board

(GRAND ISLAND, NE)- The Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) elected a new chairman and a new vice-chairman at their board of directors meeting on Thursday. The board elected Mick Reynolds, Wood River, as the new chairman of the board. Reynolds replaces Jim Bendfeldt who served two full terms. Jerry Wiese, Grand Island, was elected as vice-chairman of the board. Officers are eligible to serve two, two-year terms.

Two directors were also appointed to the board for a two-year term. Tom Downey, Lexington, was appointed to Sub-District 2 and Ryan Kegley, Kearney, was appointed to Sub-District 4. The two vacancies were due to directors recently moving out of their subdistricts. Chris Henry, Cozad, moved out of Subdistrict 2 and resigned from the board. Eric Davis, Kearney, was elected to replace Keith Stafford in Subdistrict 4. Davis moved to a new location in Kearney and inadvertently moved into Subdistrict 3.

#### OTHER ACTION/AGENDA ITEMS

**-30-Year Acreage Reserve Program** The board approved adding a section to CPNRD's Ground Water Management Program Rules and Regulations titled *Section B-Rule 8: 30-Year Acreage Reserve Program-Participation Eligibility and Rules*. The 30-Year Acreage Reserve Program will provide a long-term solution in protecting surface water rights. Irrigation districts will sign up for the conservation program and surface water users will have the option to opt-in or opt-out of the program annually.

A public hearing on the addition was held prior to the board meeting with minor amendments entered into record at the hearing. The Program was developed to ensure that supplies in the Platte Basin are optimized and managed efficiently with maximum benefits and to meet water management obligations for the Basin-Wide Plan for Joint Integrated Water Resources Management of Over-Appropriated Portions of the Platte River Basin, CPNRD's Integrated Management Plan, and Nebraska's New Depletion Plan for the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program. The Program will take effect on March 4, 2021.

**-Healthy Soils Presentation** Mike McDonald, Retired Nebraska Wesleyan Professor/Farmer, gave a presentation on the Healthy Soils Task Force created by the Nebraska Legislature in 2019 to develop a comprehensive report on methods to incorporate healthy soil stewardship practices into working agricultural operations.

**-Outdoor Classroom Application** The board approved an Outdoor Classroom application submitted by the Kearney Public Schools Foundation to improve educational opportunities in the Outdoor Learning Area at Kearney High School. Copies of the book *40 Chances* by Howard Buffett and signage for the school's wetland area were approved for funding in the amount of \$1,335.

**-Drop Structure Bids** The board selected Kokes Construction of Ord, Nebraska, to install a drop structure, channel shaping and riprap channel protection at the Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Flood Risk Reduction Project in Grand Island, NE. Kokes Construction submitted the low bid of \$699,725 of the

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nine bids received. 75 percent of the cost will be funded by the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program, with the remaining 25 percent divided between the Central Platte NRD, City of Grand Island and Hall County.

**-Appeals** The board denied requests from Dawson County and Merrick County landowners.

**-Violation Report** Luke Zakrzewski, GIS Image Analyst, reported that 45 landowners/producers irrigated land that wasn't certified or approved for irrigation through a transfer in 2020. Zakrzewski said there were 35 new violations ranging from 1.04 to 27.18 acres. Two of the violations were repeat offenses. Zakrzewski will notify landowners that they are in violation of the NRD's Rules and Regulations and will request that they contact the NRD to get into compliance by March 3, 2021.

**-Easement Development** Luke Zakrzewski reported to the Variance/Appeals Subcommittee that there may be potential development on land where the NRD has a conservation easement in Dawson County. The Committee will take no action until a full plan is available for review.

**-Managers Report** Lyndon Vogt, General Manager, reported that the court date for Bernard Katzberg's Cease and Desist violation has been postponed. Bernard has contacted the office and is in the process of getting into compliance. He was instructed to reach out to the NRD's legal counsel to address the violation.

**-Building Committee** The board approved a conceptual design services contract with JEO Consulting, not to exceed \$20,000, for a feasibility study to build facilities at the Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Flood Risk Reduction site west of Grand Island.

**-Natural Resources Conservation Service** Joe Krolikowski, District Conservationist, supplied a written report which included the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Landowners can sign up for the program until Feb. 12, 2021. The competitive program, administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes. New cropland offered in the program must have been planted for four out of six crop years from 2012 to 2017. Additionally, producers with land already enrolled but expiring on Sept. 30, 2021, can re-enroll this year. The acreage offered by producers and landowners is evaluated competitively; accepted offers will begin Oct. 1, 2021.

**-Nebraska Association of Resources District** Jim Bendfeldt, CPNRD Representative, reported that there were 45 Legislative bills introduced this session regarding natural resources. Of those 45 bills, the NRD managers and NARD committees voted to oppose eight bills.

**-Nebraska Natural Resources Commission** Mick Reynolds reported that he was selected to continue representing the Middle Platte Basin for the Natural Resources Commission at the Middle Platte Basin's caucus held on January 13, 2021.

**-Cost-Share** 11 cost-share applications for windbreaks, underground pipe to pivot, center pivot incentive, tree planting, and well decommission were approved through the Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation and Central Platte NRD cost-share programs in the amount of \$33,922.56.

**-Upcoming Board Meetings** February 25, March 25, April 22, May 27

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