

November 18, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Central Platte NRD Board Approves Redistricting Modifications

(GRAND ISLAND, NE) – On Thursday, the Central Platte Natural Resources District’s (CPNRD) Board of Directors approved the proposed new subdistrict boundaries to submit to local county clerks. The CPNRD boundaries reach from the Lincoln–Dawson county line near Gothenburg to Hwy 81 near Columbus. The District includes all or parts of 11 counties: Dawson, Custer, Buffalo, Hall, Howard, Nance, Merrick, Hamilton, Platte, Polk and Frontier. Modifications were made to align with the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau data released and the requirement that each subdistrict within the CPNRD must be substantially equal in population. With a total population of 144,855 people, each subdistrict population now averages 14,486. CPNRD’s directors will remain in their previous subdistrict.

AGENDA/ACTION ITEMS

-Board Officer Nominating Committee Chuck Maser, Ed Stoltenberg and Ryan Kegley were elected to a three-member nominating committee to make recommendations for board secretary and treasurer. Board officers may serve two, two-year terms. Deb VanMatre, Gibbon, has served two full terms and is not eligible for re-election as secretary. Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island, has served one term and is eligible for re-election as treasurer. The committee will report their recommendations in December.

-Outdoor Classroom Application The Board approved an Outdoor Classroom application in the amount of \$2,000 from Centura High School to install a living windbreak on the west side and south end of the football field and track to provide educational opportunities for students from preschool through high school. The proposed project would be maintained by the 7th grade shop class, high school landscaping class and the Centura maintenance staff.

-Conservation Collaboration Cooperative Agreement The Board approved an amendment for the Conservation Collaboration Cooperative Agreement to provide additional funding to hire a burn plan specialist and increase the duration of the agreement. The Burn Plan Specialist position will be housed in CPNRD’s office and directly supervised by CPNRD’s General Manager with day-to-day activities to be outlined by the Range Management Specialist. The agreement is held with the Nebraska Community Foundation on behalf of the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture and Central Platte NRD for funds received from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

-Managers Report Lyndon Vogt, General Manager, reported on the following:

-Update on Violators: Kurt Kuhn’s motion of default judgment hearing was November 15, 2021. He signed a consent decree and it was filed in the Merrick County District Court. He paid a penalty of \$2,500 plus court costs. Mike Munsterman’s motion of default judgment hearing was held on November 9, 2021. He was requested to pay a \$3,000 civil penalty plus additional court costs. The court also granted an injunctive relief that will prevent him from irrigating the property identified in the complaint. If he irrigates the property, he will be in contempt of court.

- General Manager Rod Horn, South Platte NRD in Sidney, announced his retirement effective the end of this year. Galen Wittrock, the current assistant manager, has been chosen as the new SPNRD General Manager effective January 1, 2022. Dave Clabaugh, Manager of the Lower Big Blue NRD in Beatrice, also announced his retirement effective the end of this year also. No replacement has been named yet.

-A hearing will be held on Friday, December 3, 2021, on LR 23 that required the 23 Natural Resources Districts to submit progress reports to the Nebraska State Legislature to ensure that the NRDs are fulfilling their set responsibilities.

-Master Plan Marcia Lee, Information/Education Specialist, provided a draft of the District's proposed 2021-2031 Master Plan. This comprehensive plan provides a broad framework for the efficient and orderly development and management of natural resources. The Plan is required to be updated every ten years under the Nebraska Natural Resources District Act. The board will review the updates and consider approval of the Plan at the December board meeting.

-Precision Conservation Program Morgan Wrich, Precision Conservation Specialist, reported that she has met with several growers and has started signing them up to implement cover crops post-harvest in Dawson County. Wrich said reports showing how well producers are meeting carbon sequestration goals will be available next year.

-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Joe Krolikowski, District Conservationist, reported on the new Nebraska Soil Carbon Project funding from the NRCS. The signup for this program is ongoing, applicants who wish to be considered for FY2022 funds have until December 17, 2021, to complete an application. This is a competitive program, so applications will be funded by using a ranking system. The project provides financial incentives to producers who utilize key conservation practices in central Nebraska. Farmers can adopt soil health practices--including cover crops, no-till, and diverse crop rotations that store carbon in the soil. The stored carbon is utilized by private companies to help reach their goals around sustainability. Depending on the practices implemented, producers could earn up to \$45 per acre each year. For details contact Courtney Widup, CPNRD Water Resources Technician, at (308) 385-6282 or widup@cpnrd.org.

-Nebraska Natural Resources Districts The NARD Foundation donated \$5,000 to FFA and \$3,000 to Nebraska Ag Youth Institute. NARD also entered into an agreement with Executive Travel companies to distribute trees funded by their donation to all Districts beginning with an initial \$50,000 statewide.

-Cost-Share A well abandonment application through the Central Platte NRD cost-share program was approved in the amount of \$500.

-Upcoming Board Meetings December 16, January 27, February 24

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