

- ✓ June 10, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Omaha-area flood plains might recede on new FEMA maps
- ✓ June 12, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Developers home in on one of the nation's fastest-growing housing markets: Sarpy County
- ✓ June 16, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Board member banned for 3 years from federal contracts, accused of failing to disclose a conflict of interest
- ✓ June 16, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, \$55 million upgrade will extend life of Offutt's lone runway

- ✓ June 16, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Lake Cunningham's public campground closed after trace levels of E. coli found in well water
- ✓ June 18, 2016, Omaha World Herald editorial: A group effort
- ✓ June 20, 2016, Papio-Missouri River NRD board member Scott Japp found dead
- ✓ June 20, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Heavy rains cause Papio NRD to again close Elkhorn River access sites for tubing
- ✓ June 20, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Bikers are thrilled about South Omaha Trail, even though it's not done yet
- ✓ June 20, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Constituents, officials remember Scott Japp as 'a strong voice for the people'
- ✓ June 22, 2016, Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Japp a tragic loss
- ✓ June 23, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Name of NRD board member Scott Japp, who died in a farm accident, won't appear on November ballot
- ✓ June 24, 2016, Washington Co. Pilot Tribune article, PMRNRD board to discuss Japp's vacant seat at July meeting
- ✓ June 28, 2016, Washington Co. Pilot Tribune article, City to build stormwater detention facility, subdivision road
- ✓ June 29, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Sarpy County wants your feedback on plan update, trails
- ✓ June 29, 2016, Sioux City Journal article, Kramper Lake offers great fishing promise
- ✓ July 1, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Zebra mussel larvae have been found again in Zorinsky Lake
- ✓ July 1, 2016, Washington Co. Enterprise article, Engineers: Most South Creek parcels not in floodplain, City tables sending remapping request to FEMA
- ✓ July 5, 2016, Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Corps should address flood risk
- ✓ July 5, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Flood of 2011 'Herculean effort' fended off a major disaster here
- ✓ July 12, 2016, Omaha World Herald editorial: Path to progress for bike fans
- ✓ July 12, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Douglas County Board vote could increase spending, but leave property tax rate unchanged
- ✓ July 13, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Fred Conley's presence on Metro college board could cost school millions in federal funding
- ✓ July 13, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Douglas County Board OKs \$390.2 million budget; property tax levy unchanged

June 2016 Information/Education Report

Information

- Began preparations for 2017 Omaha Boat Sports and Travel Show
- Prepared I&E budget recommendations
- Shot aerial photos of reservoir sites and other projects
- Continued updating web site pages and worked with redesign team at JM Web
- Scheduled Information Campaign spots on TV stations and Omaha.com
- Distributed news releases
- Responded to many requests for information received thru web site Contact Us feature
- Attended Affirmative Action staff training
- Began work on Fall, 2016 Spectrum Newsletter
- Monitored Radio, TV, and newspaper coverage of subjects relevant to NRDs

Education

June Programming Schedule:

6/6-6/10- NRD Backyard Explorers Nature Camp
6/13- Jefferson Elementary- Recycle Relay- 2 programs- 45 kids (k-5th Grade)
6/14- Omaha Children's Museum - Booth
6/15- The Hills Montessori- Insects- 20 students
6/16- Omaha Children's Museum – Booth
6/17- Druid Hill-Insects-80 students
6/20-6/24- NRD Discovering Nature Camp
6/28- Benson Library- Lizards- 46 people
6/29- Adams Branch: Omaha Public Library- Snakes- 80 people
6/30- Omaha Children's Museum – Booth

Planning:

Updates/Monitoring of Papio-Missouri River NRD Facebook/Twitter/Google+/Instagram Sites and Web Pages
General NRD Animal Care
2016 Camp Confirmation Correspondence with Parents and Camp Teachers
Outdoor Classroom Grants & Mini Classroom Grants
Assist with Press Releases and Press Statements
Designed/Printed new sign for Barn Owl

Meetings/Trainings:

Safety Committee Meeting
Intern Training
Barn Owl Training
Zoo Partnership Meeting
Cultivation Newsletter Meeting
Affirmative Action Training



MADE WITH PAPER FROM
WELL-MANAGED FORESTS

many thanks to you!

From
Jerry & Karen Weires

Dear Mr. Warren,
Kudos and many
thanks to you and
your maintenance
person/people who did
an excellent job of
cleaning the group shelter
this past week. The
seniors from the Southwest
"Y" were so appreciative
of the nice shelter and the
mowed "lawn." -And
sending in a deer and
turkey was an added
bonus (smile) Thank you.

ST. AUGUSTINE

INDIAN MISSION

June 13, 2016

JUN 20 REC'D

John Zaugg
Papio- Missouri River Natural Resources District
8901 S. 154th Street, Suite 4
Omaha, NE 68138-0121

Dear John,

It is always a great joy when we receive a gift such as your \$2,162.37! We truly appreciate any help we receive which enables us to continue educating our Native American children here at St. Augustine's Indian Mission School. May the dear Lord reward you in a way He knows best!

We are currently at 123 students. There is always some migration in and out since families come and go depending on job availability.

Nowadays jobs are hard to come by as we all well know. However, our numbers are going up in comparison to other years for which we are grateful. Again, we have dedicated teachers who take to heart the needs of the children, educating them in body, mind and spirit.

We hope and pray that you and your family are doing well. God's Blessings to you!

Gratefully,



Fr. David Korth
Director

“Thank you for helping us educate these beautiful children of God-body, mind & spirit!”

Tax Note: St. Augustine Indian Mission is a Tax Exempt 501 (c) (3) institution. No goods or services were exchanged for this gift except the intangible religious benefit to the donor. Federal ID # 47-0398898.



*The trees we planted
only increase the beauty
of the Mission. Thank you
so much. Kathy Soley*

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Carl Lorenzen, Chairperson

Paul Cerio Lisa Kramer Mary Alice Johnson Jeff Quist Steven Kruger Ronald Hineline

John Winkler, General Manager
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District
8901 S. 154th St.
Omaha, NE 68138

June 28, 2016

RE: Subdistrict 1 Representative

Dear John:

The Washington County Board of Supervisors requests that the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District fill the vacancy created by the death of Scott Japp to Subdistrict 1 as soon as possible. This will provide needed representation for Washington County and other counties within Subdistrict 1.

Please give this request your immediate attention.

Sincerely,



Carl Lorenzen, Chairman
Washington County Board of Supervisors

June 2016

[illegible]

Updated: June 13, 2016

Current and On-Going Projects P-MRNRD Legal Counsel

★ = Top Priority

F = Future Work – No Assignment

N = New Assignment

O = Others Handling

W = Work in Progress

P = Counsel Portion Completed

B = Next Board Meeting

- **Little Papio:** (Cleveland)
 - ★ Design Plastics Easement document for culvert repair (N)
- **Big Papio:** (Cleveland)
- **West Branch:** (Cleveland)
 - ★ Land Exchange with Sarpy Co. (96th St.) (P)
- **Western Sarpy Dike:** (Cleveland/Petermann)
 - NRDs/NE-ARNG Interlocal for Camp Ashland Property (F)
 - ★ Sarpy County Cost Share Agreement Amendment (N)
- **Floodway Purchase Program:** (Laster/Grint)
 - Arlington Purchase Agreements, Deeds, etc. (F)
- **Trail Projects:** (Williams)
 - ★ West Papio Trail, Giles to Millard – Interlocal w/Omaha, La Vista (B)
- **Missouri River Corridor Project:** (Becic)
- **USDA PL 566 Projects, Silver Creek and Pigeon/Jones Watershed:** (Schumacher/Cleveland)

- ✪ Papio W-3 Eminent Domain (Camden) (W)
 - Tek/Mud PL 566 Site 41A access (F)
 - Papio PL 566 Site W-2 Issues (F)
- **Papio Watershed Dam Sites:** (Grint/Laster/Williams)
 - ✪ ROW Acquisition Documents for WP6 & WP7 – Thrasher Sed. Basins (B)
 - ✪ Transfer Deed to City of Omaha for Zorinsky Basin 1 (P)
 - ✪ Transfer Deed to City of Papillion change elevation of Top of Dam for Prairie Queen (P)
 - ✪ City of Omaha Interlocal Agreement for ZB-2 (W)
 - ✪ Papio DS15A Sale of Surplus Property/bid documents (B)
 - ✪ WP6 & WP7 Interlocal Agreement with Papillion and Sarpy Co. (N)
- **Papio Creek Watershed Partnership (Stormwater):** (Grint)
- **Missouri River R-613 and R-616 Levees:** (Cleveland/Woodward)
 - Offutt AFB O&M Agreement (P)
- **Rural Water Projects:** (Nelson)
 - ✪ WCRW – Lakeland Estates Water Main Extension Developer Agreement and Easements (W)
 - WCRW – Amendment to Washington Count Interlocal Agreement (F)
- **Other:**
 - ✪ Southern Sarpy watershed Partnership Interlocal Agreement (W) (Laster)
 - ✪ Erosion and Sediment Control Program Rules & Regulation Update (B) (Schumacher, Williams)
 - Lower Platte Weed Management Interlocal Agreement Amendment (N) (Woodward)

**PAPILLION CREEK
WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP**

MEETING MINUTES



**Partnership Meeting
June 23, 2016 – 10:00 AM – Board Room
Natural Resource Center, 8901 S 154th Street, Omaha, NE**

Attendants:

See attached sign-in sheet.

Purpose

A meeting of the Partnership was held on the above date in order to discuss topics stated in the attached agenda. The meeting began at approximately 10:10 am.

1. Introductions

- An agenda, sign-up sheet, and handouts were distributed.

2. MS4 Permit Update

- Emma Trewitt and Pat Ducey with NDEQ gave the group and update on the MS4 permit. They indicated that they received the comments from the Partnership and were working to get a new draft to the permittees in the next few weeks. The new draft will align more with Omaha's permit. Emma and Pat addressed some of the Partnerships comments. Nina Cudahy indicated that she would be providing comments on their permit and a revised SWMP in the next few days. Emma noted that the H2O communities will be meeting in July, the day before the NeFSMA conference and would welcome a roundtable discussion on the permit draft.

3. Watershed Management Fees

- Amanda Grint discussed the draft ordinance regarding collection of Watershed Management Fees that was distributed in 2009. Lori Laster had emailed out the draft ordinance prior to the meeting. It was noted that in the draft ordinance there was language for the exemption of playgrounds and sports activity areas from the fees for religious assembly facilities and public and private schools. This is the same language and exemption that Omaha allows for the sewer fees. The group discussed how each community handles fees and exemptions. Ralston and Omaha adopted the ordinance with the exemption and the other communities do not have the institutional exemption. An example of how Omaha calculates the area for a school development was distributed to the group and discussed.



- The next steps are for each community to check with their legal staff to determine if the exemption was specifically removed for a reason. Also, Amanda will follow up with Ryan Haas and the City of Omaha to ask a few of the groups' questions regarding public facilities and stormwater detention facilities. Finally, Nina Cudahy will check with Ryan about the possibility of removing the exemption from the ordinance.

4. Vote – Papio Watershed Hydrology Update

- Amanda Grint gave a presentation on how an update of the Papio hydrology fits in to the ongoing FEMA flood study of the Big and Little Papillion Creeks. The schedule of the flood maps was discussed and the potential changes that the 2013 NOAA revised rainfall intensity and distribution along with flood control projects could make on the peak flows. It appears that using this newer data might decrease peak flows. The peak flow reductions would then need to be translated in to floodplains using hydraulic modeling. The group discussed the possible impacts. The NRD entered in to an agreement with FYRA Engineering to update the hydrology. After that step is complete, it would be necessary for a contract to complete the hydraulic model which at this time is estimated at approximately \$300,000. The Partnership is being asked to contribute \$150,000 toward both the hydrology and hydraulics since this affects all communities. This work would be done with FEMA's concurrence and therefore if the hydrology is not accepted, it would not be necessary to redo the hydraulics. The work will be done in phases as needed.
- All communities in attendance concurred that the Partnership would contribute 30% up to a maximum of \$150,000 toward the hydrology and hydraulic update. (see attached vote sheet).

5. FY17 Budget

- Amanda Grint presented the FY17 budget and noted that it included the annual reimbursements to the City of Omaha and NRD as well as the contribution to the Papio hydrology and hydraulics. The group concurred with the annual budget as presented.

6. Next Meeting Date

- The next meeting will be held July 28, 2016 at 10am at the NRC building.

7. Adjourn

- An agenda and the handouts passed out at the meeting are available upon request.

Please contact Amanda Grint at 444-6222 regarding any questions or comments concerning these meeting minutes.

**PAPILLION CREEK
WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP**



**Record of Vote
June 23, 2016 - 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM – Board Room
Natural Resources Center, 8901 S. 154th Street, Omaha, NE**

**Vote to Contribute 30% up to a maximum of \$150,000 to the Papio Hydrology
and Hydraulics Update**

Community	Voting Representative	Vote
Bellevue	Matt Knight	Yes
Boys Town	-	-
Gretna	Dan Gittinger	Yes
La Vista	John Kottmann	Yes
Omaha	Nina Cudahy	Yes
Papillion	Mark Stursma	Yes
Ralston	Jerry Chancellor	Yes
Sarpy County	Bruce Fountain	Yes
P-MRNRD	Marlin Petermann	Yes



**PAPILLION CREEK
WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP**



SIGN-IN SHEET

**Partnership Meeting
June 23, 2016 – 10:00 AM– Board Room
Natural Resources Center, 8901 S 154th Street, Omaha, NE
(Please Print)**

	NAME & EMPLOYER	MAILING ADDRESS STREET - CITY/ZIP	TELEPHONE & EMAIL ADDRESS
	Lori Laster P-MRNRD	8901 S. 154 th Street Omaha, NE 68138	(402) 444-6222 llaster@papiopartnership.org
X	Amanda Grint P-MRNRD	8901 S. 154 th Street Omaha, NE 68138	(402) 444-6222 agrint@papiopartnership.org
X	Marlin Petermann P-MRNRD	8901 S. 154 th Street Omaha, NE 68138	(402) 444-6222 mpetermann@papiopartnership.org
X	Nina Cudahy Omaha Public Works	5600 S. 10 th St. Omaha, NE 68107	(402) 444-3915 ncudahy@ci.omaha.ne.us
	Selma Kessler Omaha Public Works	5600 S. 10 th St. Omaha, NE 68107	(402) 444-3915 skessler@ci.omaha.ne.us
X	Jim Kee Omaha Public Works	5600 S. 10 th St. Omaha, NE 68107	(402) 444-3915 jkee@ci.omaha.ne.us
X	Bruce Fountain Sarpy County	1210 Golden Gate Dr. Papillion, NE	(402) 593-1555 bfountain@sarpy.com
X	Donna Lynam Sarpy County	1210 Golden Gate Dr. Papillion, NE	(402) 593-1555 dlynam@sarpy.com
	Scott Kardell Boys Town	355 McBreen Circle Boys Town, NE 68010	(402) 498-1135 scott.kardell@boystown.org
X	Mark Stursma City of Papillion	122 E. Third St. Papillion, NE 68046	(402) 597-2060 mstursma@papillion.org
	Jeff Thompson City of Papillion	122 E. Third St. Papillion, NE 68046	(402) 898-9092 jefft@papillion.org
X	John Kottmann City of La Vista	8116 Park View Blvd. La Vista, NE 68128	(402) 331-4343 jkottmann@cityoflavista.org
	Chris Solberg City of La Vista	8116 Park View Blvd. La Vista, NE 68128	(402) 331-4343 csolberg@cityoflavista.org
	Joe Soucie City of La Vista	8116 Park View Blvd. La Vista, NE 68128	(402) 331-4343 jsoucie@cityoflavista.org
	Dan Freshman City of Ralston	8220 Serum Ave. Ralston, NE 68127	(402) 331-4118 dfreshman@cityofralston.com
X	Jerry Chancellor City of Ralston	8220 Serum Ave. Ralston, NE 68127	(402) 331-4118 jchancellor@cityofralston.com
	Chris Shewchuk City of Bellevue	1510 Wall Street Bellevue, NE 68005	(402) 293-3032 chris.shewchuk@bellevue.net
	Tammi Palm City of Bellevue		

U:\sign_in_sheet-POPULATED.doc

File: 535 "PCWP"

PARTNERS

Bellevue Boys Town Gretna La Vista Omaha Papillion Ralston Sarpy County Papio-Missouri River NRD

**PAPILLION CREEK
WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP**



SIGN-IN SHEET

**Partnership Meeting
June 23, 2016 – 10:00 AM– Board Room
Natural Resources Center, 8901 S 154th Street, Omaha, NE
(Please Print)**

	Jeff Roberts City of Bellevue		
	Kris Faris City of Gretna	204 N. McKenna Gretna, NE 68028	kris@cityofgretna.com
X	Dan Giittinger City of Gretna	204 N. McKenna Gretna, NE 68028	daniel@cityofgretna.com
	Steve Perry City of Gretna		
X	Andy Szatko City of Omaha	5600 S. 10th St. Omaha, NE 68107	andy.szatko@cityofomaha.org
	Lynn Dittmer MAPA	2222 Cuming St. Omaha, NE 68102	ldittmer@mapacog.org
mk	Matt Knight City of Bellevue	1510 Wall Street Bellevue, NE 68005	Matt.knight@bellevue.net
	PAT DWASE SARPA	15100 S 84TH Papillion, NE 68046	pdwase@sarpa.com
X	Jordan Cook La Vista - PW	2900 Portal	jwinter@cityoflavista.org
X	Mike McIntosh, LRA	14710 W. Dodge Rd	mike.mcintosh@lra-inc.com
	Patrick Ducey NDEC Emma Trewthitt	1200 N St. Suite 400 Lincoln, NE 68508	patrick.ducey@nebraska.gov emma.trewthitt@nebraska.gov

PARTNERS

Bellevue Boys Town Gretna La Vista Omaha Papillion Ralston Sarpy County Papio-Missouri River NRD



SSWP Fact Sheet

CREATING A WATERSHED PLAN TO ADDRESS STORMWATER ISSUES IN THE SOUTHERN SARPY WATERSHED

Acting Now will Keep the Public Safe from Future Floodwaters

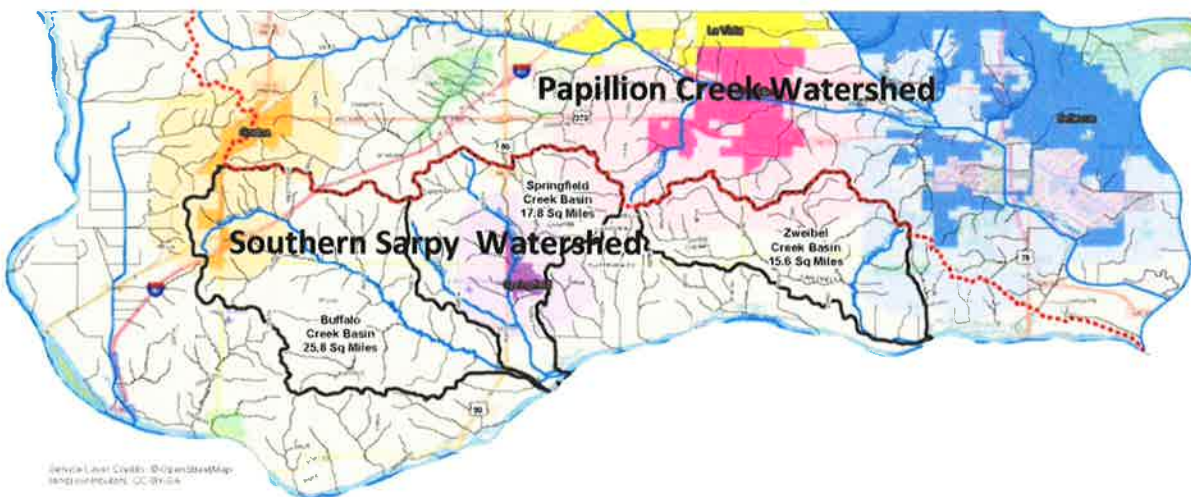
Planning is crucial in managing stormwater. As development occurs, stormwater runoff increases and our streams become swollen, roads are overtopped, and low-lying areas are flooded, causing damage to both public and private properties. Creating and implementing a watershed plan can minimize the damaging effects of high runoff events. The Southern Sarpy Watershed Partnership (SSWP) was created in early 2016 to establish the framework for a stormwater management program and a watershed plan.

In managing stormwater, keeping a path for stormwater is important, as is keeping people away from floodwaters. The current flood studies and mapping for Sarpy County are outdated. These studies and maps need to be updated to identify accurate flood hazards and risk.

Knowing the risks and understanding the resources within the watershed are essential in making sound stormwater decisions in a developing watershed. Now is the time to be proactive and establish a plan to manage stormwater to keep the public safe by reducing the potential for future floods and restoring stream channels to their natural function.

Southern Sarpy Watershed Drains into the Elkhorn and Platte Rivers

The Southern Sarpy Watershed (Watershed) encompasses approximately 145 square miles that drain into the Elkhorn River or the Platte River in Sarpy County. The Watershed has several drainage basins, with approximately 40 percent of the area contained within the Buffalo Creek, Springfield Creek, and Zwiebel Creek Basins. Jurisdictions located within the watershed are Bellevue, Gretna, Papillion, Springfield, and Sarpy County. The remaining 100 square miles of Sarpy County are a part of the Papillion Creek Watershed.





SSWP Fact Sheet

Stormwater Management Policies at a Glance

The SSWP has drafted stormwater management policies for the Southern Sarpy Watershed using the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership policies as a starting point. These initial policies are for new development or significant redevelopment, and are aimed at protecting soil and water resources. These policies may be revised when a watershed management plan is developed. Key features of the policies are summarized below:

- Policy Group #1: Water Quality Improvement improves water quality by requiring the use of low-impact development strategies (that is, design techniques that promote infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation, and temporary detention of stormwater) to provide for water quality control of the first ½ inch of stormwater runoff and to maintain peak discharge rates during the 2-year storm event based on baseline land use conditions.
- Policy Group #2: Peak Flow Reduction reduces stormwater peak discharges due to development by maintaining or reducing peak discharge rates during the 2-, 10-, and 100-year storm events under baseline land use conditions.
- Policy Group #3: Landscape Preservation, Restoration, and Conservation protects natural areas along creeks. A creek setback is to be provided along all streams equal to three times the channel depth plus 50 feet (3:1 plus 50 feet) from the edge of low water on both sides of the channel.
- Policy Group #4: Erosion and Sediment Control and Other BMPs covers federal and state regulatory requirements for construction activities that disturb greater than 1 acre. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are required on construction sites to minimize soil loss.
- Policy Group #5: Floodplain Management promotes sound floodplain management consistent with state and federal floodplain programs as well as placing added limitations on development in the floodway fringe. In areas with no special flood hazard designation, hydrologic and hydraulic analyses will be required.
- Policy Group #6: Stormwater Management Financing provides for a dedicated, sustainable funding mechanism (that is, a watershed fee on development) to help implement programs to address local, state, and federal regulations, including a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Management Program and the development of a Southern Sarpy Watershed Plan. Revenues from the watershed fee during the first 5 years will fund about one-third of the annual financing of the NPDES Stormwater Management Program activities and development of a watershed plan. After 2020, funds would be used to implement the Watershed Management Plan.

The Need to Administer State and Federal Regulations

In compliance with the provisions of the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created the NPDES permit. Two types of NPDES permits are applicable to the watershed: 1) Phase II stormwater for municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), and 2) stormwater associated with construction activity. The Phase II stormwater requirements cover six minimum control measures,¹ including the development of a NPDES Stormwater Management Program. The NPDES stormwater permit for discharges from construction activities affects all jurisdictions regardless of population or the size of the community. Any earth-disturbing activity of 1 acre or more of land requires an NPDES construction activity permit.

¹ The six minimum control measures are Public Education and Outreach, Public Involvement/Participation, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Runoff Control, Post-Construction Runoff Control, and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping.



SSWP Fact Sheet

The Need to Develop a Watershed Plan

Currently, no watershed plan exists for the Southern Sarpy Watershed. Creating such a plan will require a funding source, time to prepare the plan, and a phased approach. Working together to adopt watershed-wide stormwater management programs provides continuity for communities, designers, and developers. The watershed plan would include the following:

- Hydrologic/Hydraulics Analysis. Hydrologic modeling quantifies the rainfall/runoff response by defining peak discharge rates over time and volumes for selected design storms (that is, hypothetical storms used in modeling). Hydraulic modeling defines water levels based on peak discharges for selected design storms. This watershed plan would update Buffalo, Springfield, and Zwiebel Creeks with a detailed hydrologic/hydraulic analysis and would provide an approximate method for all other tributaries. The watershed plan would not update the Elkhorn and Platte Rivers analyses. Peak flow and water levels would be defined for drainage areas less than 1 square mile. The initial phase of the plan would develop baseline hydrologic and hydraulic models that can be used by developers to evaluate effects of development and structural improvements.
- Floodplain Mapping. Hydrologic/hydraulic and topographic data are used to create flood hazard maps that outline a community's flood risk. The watershed plan would create floodplain mapping that could be used by FEMA to map flood hazards. Base flood elevations and profiles would be generated for Buffalo, Springfield, and Zwiebel Creeks.
- Stream Stabilization/Restoration. Numerous streams within the Southern Sarpy Watershed have degrading channels and banks, which have led to damages of both riparian and public infrastructure. Stopping the sudden change in grade or elevation in a streambed can be achieved with grade stabilization, while stream bank erosion can be achieved with bank stabilization. Stream restoration aims to restore the natural state and function of the river system in support of biodiversity, recreation, flood management, and landscape development.
- Peak Flow Reduction. Regionalizing the location of stormwater detention facilities (that is, reservoirs or lakes) can provide multi-purpose benefits along with cost-effective solutions. The use of regional detention basins may reduce or even eliminate the need for on-site peak flow reduction facilities on each development. Regional reservoirs provide opportunities for outdoor public recreation facilities and other public amenities. Recreational trails can be built, and operation and maintenance costs reduced with a larger structure.
- Water Quality. Water quality BMPs are used to capture and treat stormwater close to where the rain falls. Regionalizing water quality basins to control the first ½ inch of stormwater runoff may be desirable. Post-construction stormwater control measures, such as BMPs on each development, may be reduced or eliminated with a regional water quality basins. The placement of upstream basins (ponds) to improve water quality and extend the useful life of regional detention structures will be evaluated.
- Resource Inventory. Environmentally sensitive areas in the county need to be identified, restored, and protected. A soil, water, and plant resource inventory would identify and classify naturally occurring resources along with problem areas.



SSWP Fact Sheet

Funding

Administration of the NPDES Stormwater Management Program and creation of a watershed plan will require funding, to include a combination of public and private funds. It is estimated that it will require \$300,000 per year for 5 years to support the NPDES Stormwater Management Program and watershed plan development. Table 1 shows the budgetary costs.

Table 1. Budgetary Costs for Southern Sarpy Watershed 2016-2020

Element	Summary	Budget Cost
NPDES Stormwater Management Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine (compliance) inspections of active grading sites Other activities required to meet the six minimum control measures of MS4 permit. 	\$500,000
Southern Sarpy Watershed Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phased watershed management plan development based on available funding 	\$1,000,000
Total		\$1,500,000

Private funds would come from development through a watershed fee. Private watershed fees are intended to account for one-third of required funds and paid to the applicable local zoning jurisdiction with the building permit application. Table 2 shows the proposed Watershed Fee structure. Cumulative revenue is estimated to be \$500,000 over the first five years (2016 thru 2020), averaging \$100,000 per year.

Table 2. Watershed Fee Structure

Fee Category	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Single Family Residential per lot (also includes low-density multi-family up to 4-plexes)	\$864	\$886	\$908	\$930	\$954
High-Density Multi-Family Residential per developable acre (beyond 4-plexes)	\$3,803	\$3,898	\$3,996	\$4,095	\$4,198
Commercial/Industrial per developable acre	\$4,609	\$4,724	\$4,842	\$4,963	\$5,087

Adjusted 2.5% per year for Inflation.

Public contributions from the Partners through a 5-year Interlocal Agreement are intended to account for two-thirds of required funds. Public monies of \$200,000 (totaling \$1.0 million over five years) per year would come from the six members of the SSWP. Table 3 shows the proposed distribution of the public monies based on population and jurisdictional area.

Table 3. Annual Partner Contributions for Southern Sarpy Watershed

Jurisdiction	Contribution Amount	Percentage of Total
Bellevue	\$16,000	8%
Gretna	\$10,000	5%
Papillion	\$16,000	8%
Springfield	\$12,000	6%
Sarpy County	\$80,000	40%
P-MRNRD	\$66,000	33%
Total	\$200,000	100%

Omaha-area flood plains might recede on new FEMA maps

By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Friday, June 10, 2016 5:27 pm

Flood plains in the Omaha area could shrink when the Federal Emergency Management Agency issues new maps next year.

Preliminary information shows that new data and new reservoirs are likely to produce smaller flood plains, said John Winkler, general manager of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District.

The NRD's board on Thursday approved a \$167,000 study to produce final data. The board voted 10-0. Director Scott Japp abstained.

If FEMA agrees to use the new data, the district will pay Fyra Engineering to study water patterns in the area.

Winkler said the flood plain could shrink along the Big, Little and West Papio Creeks.

He said that over 40 years, flood plains in this area have only increased.

"This would truly be a reversal," he said.

If the data comes in as expected, the next step would be another study — at a cost of about \$500,000 — to create a flood plain map from the data. The NRD expects to pay about \$300,000 of the cost of that study, if it happens, Winkler said.

The district hopes to use new rainfall intensity and distribution data from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to build the new flood plain map.

And officials want to take into account four new reservoirs. One has been built in Papillion, one is being built near 168th and Fort Streets, and the district is in the process of acquiring land in Sarpy County for two more.

Voters denied the district a bond issue that would have allowed it to quickly build six new dams. But the district already has the funds to move forward with the three sites in progress.

One member of the public spoke about the vote. The woman, Shawn Melotz, asked that the district seek bids on the contract.

Winkler responded that Fyra Engineering already has done work in the area and has the data needed to move forward.

Japp asked why the district didn't ask state legislators to help fund the project. Winkler said the study would be specific to the Papio-NRD and wouldn't be as useful to other entities.

The information is due to FEMA in mid-October, Winkler said.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1084, roseann.moring@owh.com

Developers home in on one of the nation's fastest-growing housing markets: Sarpy County

By Cindy Gonzalez / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Sunday, June 12, 2016 12:15 am

Houston-based developer Corbin Graham drove from upper North Dakota to the Gulf of Mexico hunting for just the right spot to build his first luxury apartment venture.

His company, with 40 years under its belt, was seeking to diversify beyond its office buildings, hotels and retail centers. It sought quality of life and a promising business and population center. With that in mind, Graham stopped in Fargo, North Dakota; the Kansas City area; Wichita, Kansas; Oklahoma City — most hubs up, down and around that Interstate 29 corridor.

What he witnessed in Sarpy County's Papillion prompted his team to return with a plan to construct 540 apartments near the \$36 million Werner Park baseball stadium that opened on farmland five years ago.

"I love that ballpark," said Graham, principal of Graham Development Co. And that's not all he loved in the area: "Schools are fantastic, they're building new facilities. The area's got all the fundamentals: population growth, business-friendly cities and it's affordable."

As it turned out, Graham tapped into a growth spurt that has Sarpy County ranked among the nation's fastest-growing housing markets. New census data put Sarpy in the top 100 counties for percentage growth of housing units from 2010 to 2015.

Its No. 64 ranking — among nearly 2,500 U.S. counties with at least 5,000 dwellings — propels Sarpy into the top 3 percent of counties when it comes to the pace of bringing on new places to live, according to an analysis by David Drozd of the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Center for Public Affairs Research.

During the first half of the decade, Sarpy added about 5,200 dwellings — that includes single-family residences, apartments and other rental units, and also considers what has been torn down. Neighboring Douglas County increased its raw number of dwellings by nearly twice that, about



Sarpy houses

Houses pop up like spring flowers on Sarpy County hillsides in Jerry Torczon's Aspen Creek development.

9,500, but clocked a slower growth rate in part because it started with a relatively larger housing base.

One might look at UNO's housing growth rankings — which placed Douglas at No. 233 and Lancaster at No. 199 — as a standard way to identify the next areas to pop with businesses, retailers and other services.

“Housing units and subsequent population growth is a driver for demand for other goods and services,” Drozd said. “You’ll start to see shopping and restaurants pop up.”

Indeed, Papillion Mayor David Black expects to see office parks and a wave of daytime jobs to follow the continued residential and commercial development, and the city now is laying a foundation for that phase.

Construction itself produces jobs and fuels a local economy, too. According to the National Association of Home Builders, building 100 single-family homes typically creates a one-year estimated impact of 394 local jobs, \$28.7 million in income and \$3.6 million in taxes and revenue for local governments.

On the apartment side, from every 100 units constructed typically comes 161 jobs that first year, an estimated \$11.7 million in local income and \$2.2 million in local government revenue, says the home builders group.

At first, Houston developer Graham said, he thought the Papillion site might not be ripe enough for the housing venture he had in mind. Then he went to a Storm Chasers ballgame, walked around the Prairie Queen Recreation Area, saw all those “Sold” lots at the North Shore subdivision.

He also learned of the area's proposed \$100 million-plus multisport complex and its just-announced \$200 million project on 350 acres bordering I-80 near Highway 370 that will bring auto dealerships, retailers, distribution centers, warehouses and wholesalers.

What helped nudge him over the edge? Crews are making way for the new Costco in Sarpy's La Vista.

Said Graham: “When Costco chooses to go somewhere, that means that area is growing, and growing fast.”

Graham jumped on the momentum. As planned, the Venue apartments will feature plush amenities and large decks that look out over the nature reserve, clubhouse and pool.

The national developer said he is not done shopping for development ground in the Midwest and Omaha metro area — which rode out the housing market collapse relatively better than the country.

Consider:

From 2000 to 2008, prior to the Great Recession, Sarpy only once cracked the top 100 list of counties with the fastest-growing housing units, according to the UNO analysis. Its annual growth peaked at 4.4 percent from 2003 to 2004 and dropped the next eight years before bottoming out at 0.9 percent annual growth from 2011 to 2012.

But growth was slowing even more across the nation. And at the height of the recession, around 2009 to 2011, only about 55 counties nationally were increasing their number of housing units at a faster rate than Sarpy.

In the first half of this decade, Sarpy's dwelling count increased by more than 8 percent. And in the past seven years there was only one year when Sarpy did not make it into the top 100 counties with the fastest-growing rate of housing units.

Douglas County has improved its national standing as well. It finished at No. 301 or better each of the past five years after not placing above 378 in the prior 10 years, when it sometimes dipped below 900.

As a state, Nebraska's annual percentage growth in housing units has beat Iowa's in all but one of the past 15 years. Drozd said Nebraska trailed the U.S. growth rate each year from 2000 to 2008, tied it in 2009, and ever since has exceeded the U.S. average slightly.

"That speaks to Nebraska's overall relative strength during the recession and recovery," Drozd said. "We've had more consistent demand and housing unit growth than most other areas of the country."

In Iowa, Dallas and Polk Counties both placed in the top 100 counties for percentage growth in housing units from 2010 to 2015: Dallas was No. 14; Polk, 96.

Raw numbers have Polk up by nearly 13,000 housing units from 2010 to 2015, while Dallas is up by a third of that, about 4,000. Both counties are in the Des Moines metro area. Growth likely has been fast in Dallas County because it started small, with plenty of room to grow, said Gary Krob, coordinator for the Iowa data center at the State Library in Iowa.

"There is more land there to develop," Krob said.

Dallas has been among county growth leaders for a while, having ranked 20th in the 2000s, when Sarpy was No. 122 and Douglas only No. 802.

From a developer's point of view, Graham said, Sarpy was more attractive, as it was on the front end of growth, compared with the Des Moines-area counties he visited. "And in the development business, it pays to be early."

The same could be said of Douglas and Sarpy, said Tim Underwood of MarketGraphics of Nebraska, which analyzes homebuilding patterns in the region. He said Sarpy housing is relatively more affordable, and the county has more available land to build upon.

“Just look at the Highway 370 corridor in Sarpy and the ground that has opened up and is starting to be developed,” Underwood said.

Jerry Torczon of BHI Development is a pioneer in that area, having launched multiple Sarpy County subdivisions, including North Shores and Ashbury Farm along Highway 370 near Werner stadium, which is at 126th Street.

To the east of the ball diamond, near 114th Street, Torczon is about to start the second phase of the Granite Falls subdivision. Already graded is nearby land for the Shoppes of Granite Falls.

West of the park, grading is nearly complete on the Cove of North Shore, a gated community of villas adjacent to the planned mixed-use North Shore Village. Even farther west, near 192nd Street, houses are multiplying in Torczon's Aspen Creek subdivision, where a public school campus is under construction.

Much of the draw to the area, Torczon said, is the improved Highway 370 and its proximity to both Lincoln and Omaha. A couple living along the corridor has access to the Interstate and an easy drive to either city.

Sarpy County has benefited more in recent years, Torczon said, as developers are clustering around one another's projects to share and reduce the rising cost of infrastructure.

In the city of Papillion alone, for instance, 640 single-family lots among four new housing areas currently are pending platting approval by the City Council, compared with 950 lots approved for platting in the past five years.

Papillion communications manager Trenton Albers said the second quarter of this year is expected to be the city's highest for residential building permits.

Through May, Papillion issued 156 permits to build single-family houses, compared with 82 permits issued that same time frame last year.

Graham, whose Houston company traditionally has developed Class A office space, expects no problem filling the 540-unit Venue, which is to open later in 2017.

He plans to put more focus on Omaha and surrounding communities and said he knows of other companies doing the same.

It's a “cool” area, Graham said. “The secret is out.”

Contact the writer: 402-444-1224, cindy.gonzalez@owh.com

Board member banned for 3 years from federal contracts, accused of failing to disclose a conflict of interest

By Christopher Burbach / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Thursday, June 16, 2016 12:30 am

A branch of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has banned Fred Conley, a former Omaha Housing Authority board member, from participating in federal contracts for three years.



fredconley

Fred Conley

The ruling, called a debarment, stems from federal government claims that Conley failed to disclose a potential conflict of interest while on the OHA board.

It's unclear whether the ruling has any effect on Conley's service as an elected board member of two Omaha governmental bodies: Metropolitan Community College and the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District.

Conley said he did not think it would. His attorney, David Domina, said the ruling might prompt Conley to abstain from voting on any measures involving HUD money that come before those boards.

Conley said he was considering an appeal. He said he disagreed with the ruling.

Domina said he was "really disappointed for Fred. He has really dedicated his life to public service."

Domina noted that HUD did not find "a hint of self-dealing, self-enrichment or any personal enrichment" by Conley; rather, it found that he did not disclose a potential conflict of interest.

Conley doesn't do any business with HUD, so barring him from federal contracts will have little effect on his day-to-day life, Domina said. "But it's a matter of very significant personal pride to him."

Conley, a former Omaha City Council member, served on the OHA board from 2009 to 2013.

HUD conducted a wide-ranging audit of the agency's business during that time.

One thread of that audit led HUD to seek penalties against Conley last year. The government alleged that Conley had a conflict of interest because of his relationship with the Davis Cos., whose businesses include an insurance brokerage that does business with the Omaha Housing Authority.

HUD proposed to ban Conley from federal contracts and procurement for 10 years.

Conley contested that proposed penalty. The HUD Office of Hearings and Appeals held a hearing in

June 2015 before H. Alexander Manuel, a HUD administrative judge.

Conley had a free cubicle in Davis Cos.' offices. He used an email address with a Davis Cos. identification.

George Achola, the OHA attorney at the time, advised Conley to disclose his relationship with Davis Cos.

The government said Conley should have done so. It also said Conley had a conflict of interest because he was on both the OHA board and the board of a nonprofit corporation, Collateral Guarantee Fund Inc., and did not disclose that.

The corporation signed a contract in 2010 to rent space atop OHA apartment towers for low-frequency radio transmitters for a radio station. But the contract didn't require the station to pay any money to the Housing Authority.

Conley contended last year that he didn't have any conflict of interest and didn't believe he needed to disclose his relationship with Davis Cos. or Collateral Guarantee Fund.

He said people at OHA knew about the email address because he used it to communicate with them. He said he used the cubicle for his volunteer activities in coordinating a jazz festival.

Conley said he made no money from the Collateral Guarantee Fund's contract with the Housing Authority and had nothing to do with the contract.

Manuel, the HUD administrative judge, found that Conley had a duty to disclose his relationship with the Davis Cos. and did not fully do so. However, Manuel said, HUD had not shown that Conley had a duty to disclose his contract with Collateral Guarantee Fund. Manuel recommended a debarment of one year.

But a HUD debarring official, Craig T. Clemmensen, concluded that a longer, three-year debarment was warranted.

That was made effective May 19. It was posted on the website of a branch of HUD on May 27.

Contact the writer: christopher.burbach@owh.com, 402-444-1057, twitter.com/chrisburbach

\$55 million upgrade will extend life of Offutt's lone runway

By Joseph Morton / World-Herald Bureau | Posted: Thursday, June 16, 2016 12:00 am

WASHINGTON — The Air Force announced Wednesday that it has finalized a plan to extend the life of the runway at Offutt Air Force Base by 20 years.

The \$55 million upgrade is expected to take up to nine months to complete and is desperately needed to repair the only runway at Offutt, which serves as a major economic driver and job creator for the Omaha metropolitan area.

Design work is expected to begin in the fall, and construction would follow in 2018.

Local leaders and the state's congressional delegation had previously expressed concern that the deteriorating runway would cost the base the Air Force's largest air wing and the thousands of military and civilian employees that come with it.

"Today's announcement is great news for Offutt, our military and Nebraska," Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., said in a press release. "This decision will provide much-needed certainty to Offutt and allow the base to continue its critical role in defending our nation for decades to come."

Fischer said she's been working closely with Air Force leaders for years to advance the runway repairs, including pushing for funding to support the current runway study.

Other members of the Nebraska delegation also have pressed the Air Force for action on the runway.

Last year, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb., started an Offutt Air Force Base Task Force to conduct oversight of the runway replacement process.

That task force included Gov. Pete Ricketts, as well as Reps. Brad Ashford, D-Neb., and Adrian Smith, R-Neb.

"I am pleased that our military leaders, after thorough analysis, are committing the necessary resources to protect Offutt as an important part of our national security infrastructure," Fortenberry said in a press release.



Offutt runway showcase

"It's recognized that Offutt's runway is the worst of any in the Air Combat Command," said Col. Matt Joganich, commander of the base's 55th Mission Support Group, has said.

“Offutt will receive the necessary funding to repair the aging runway with minimal disruption to the base and the Bellevue community.”

Ashford described the runway upgrade as a team effort by the delegation. The Omaha congressman said he was glad the Air Force opted for a 20-year fix over a 10-year patch.

“It’s very needed to make sure the planes can safely land and take off and be housed there,” Ashford said.

Ricketts issued his own statement hailing the announcement.

“Offutt Air Force Base is one of our state’s largest employers, and it is key to growing Nebraska,” he said.

“This is a big win for the greater Omaha area and all of Nebraska. The Air Force’s decision to approve funding for much-needed repairs to the runway will ensure that the base continues to help grow our state.”

Ricketts said he looked forward to working with the Offutt task force to expand missions and pursue new opportunities for the base.

State Sen. Sue Crawford, whose Bellevue district includes Offutt, was pleased to learn about the Air Force’s plans.

“I’m excited to hear it’s a long-term commitment to Offutt Air Force Base,” she said. “I’ve heard all positive indications.”

Crawford said she has worked in the Legislature to secure funding for Missouri River levees to protect the base from floods, as well as on education and child-custody initiatives to make Nebraska more friendly to military families.

World-Herald staff writer Steve Liewer contributed to this report.

Contact the writer: joseph.morton@owh.com, twitter.com/MortonOWH

Lake Cunningham's public campground closed after trace levels of E. coli found in well water

Posted: Thursday, June 16, 2016 5:42 pm | Updated: 5:46 pm, Thu Jun 16, 2016.

Lake Cunningham's public campground closed after trace levels of E. coli found in well water By **Reece Ristau / World-Herald staff writer** **Live Well Nebraska**

The public campground at Lake Cunningham is closed after a test Wednesday revealed trace levels of E. coli in the well water, according to the City of Omaha's Parks and Recreation Department.

The lake, located between 84th and 96th Streets north of State Street, isn't at risk, said Brook Bench, parks director. The contamination was found in the well water, which provides public water to the camp. The water was shut off, and those using the campground received a refund and could move to N.P. Dodge Park.

The state will recommend steps to treat the water, which Bench said likely will include a chemical treatment. He said only a slight amount was detected.

The water is tested about once a week, Bench said.

E. coli is the bacteria that can cause diarrhea or illness after consuming contaminated water or food, or through contact with animals or people.

World-Herald editorial: A group effort

Posted: Saturday, June 18, 2016 1:00 am

Well done, team.

A focused group effort by state and local officials, members of Congress and citizens has achieved much-needed results for Offutt Air Force Base.

The Air Force has announced that the \$55 million upgrade will proceed for Offutt's runway, extending its life by 20 years. The repairs are projected to take up to nine months.

Had the runway's problems been left unaddressed, the deterioration could have imperiled the base's ability to retain the Air Force's largest air wing and threatened Offutt's existence.

The runway's condition was the worst among the 17 bases that fall under the Air Force's Air Combat Command.

Nebraska's House and Senate delegation mounted a well-honed effort to focus the Air Force's attention on the problem. An Offutt Air Force Base Task Force, made up of Nebraska's three congressmen plus Gov. Pete Ricketts, monitored the situation and lobbied for key improvements.

A vital related action was the state's appropriation of \$13.7 million for needed levee work at Offutt. The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District explained the need well, and business and civic leaders made a sound case for the funding. Sarpy County, the Cities of Omaha and Bellevue and the NRD each will provide \$3 million.

A sound team effort, all around.



Offutt Air Force Base

Offutt Air Force Base's biggest vulnerability, according to a hired lobbying firm, is the airfield itself: It only has one runway, which is in poor condition. A \$125 million project to fix it up has the backing of Nebraska's political and business leaders.

Papio-Missouri River NRD board member Scott Japp found dead



Scott Japp.

Papio-Missouri River NRD board member Scott Japp found dead By Nancy Gaarder and Susan Szalewski / World-Herald staff writers The Omaha World-Herald POSTED: MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2016 12:00 AM

Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board member Scott Japp was found dead Sunday in an apparent farm equipment accident in rural Washington County.

Japp, 60, was found pinned between a Caterpillar and a pickup at a rural Washington County home about 3 miles west of Kennard, according to the County Sheriff's Office. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to the Sheriff's Office, Japp had been attempting to unload a miniature antique bulldozer from a trailer when the machine jumped forward, pinning him.

A statement from the Sheriff's Office indicates the accident occurred midmorning. Japp was found about 5:30 p.m. Further details of the accident were unavailable.

Japp had served two terms on the board and was running for his third. His tenure on the board was marked by controversy as he fought the district over its dam construction plans, efforts to raise the levy and other issues. Japp had been censured twice by the NRD and sued by the district.

While he was seen as a disruptive force within the NRD, his constituents viewed him as a champion.

"It's going to be a horrible loss for us," said Shawn Melotz, a Douglas County resident whose home is in Japp's district. "He's tried to look out for the little guy, and he was controversial because he didn't rubber-stamp everything."

A Republican, Japp was a native of Washington County who grew up working with his family's soil construction business. He had been on the NRD board since 2008. Japp won his primary in May, beating two opponents. Bill Rhea Jr. came in second and Chad Scebold third.

Longtime board members Rich Tesar and John Conley said that while they had their differences with Japp, they offered their condolences to his family.

“While we disagreed on many things, I appreciated his opinion,” Conley said. “This is sad.”

Tesar expressed a similar sentiment.

“I and many board members had disagreements with Scott, but I wouldn’t wish this on anyone,” Tesar said. “I’ll pray for him and his family.”

Contact the writer: 402-444-1102, nancy.gaarder@owh.com

Heavy rains cause Papio NRD to again close Elkhorn River access sites for tubing



This photo was taken from the entrance gate at the Elkhorn Crossing access site near 252nd Street and Bennington Road. That access site is among several closed to tubing until Thursday.

June 20, 2016/By Kevin Cole / World-Herald staff writer

Heavy rains Friday in the Fremont area caused the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District to close the Elkhorn River access sites for tubing one week after they were reopened.

Just last week, the NRD had reopened Elkhorn River access sites at Elkhorn Crossing near 252nd Street and Bennington Road, Graske Crossing off West Dodge Road and the West Maple Road site.

Rich Tesar of the NRD said the river crested Saturday night at about 13 feet. The river was down just about a foot by Sunday morning.

"Access will remain closed until about Thursday," Tesar said. "We don't like to let people out on the river until it drops down to 5 feet deep. There is too much debris from the flooding and too many dangerous situations."

Close to 7 inches of rain in Dodge County caused flooding in western Douglas County. The rain swelled Maple Creek, which is a tributary of the Elkhorn River, Tesar said.

The Elkhorn Crossing Recreation Area, he said, was closed because of the flooding. No campers are allowed or access to the boat ramps.

"There's going to be a lot of clean up of mud and debris before that rec area opens again," Tesar said. "That's if it doesn't rain and flood again."

Bikers are thrilled about South Omaha Trail, even though it's not done yet

By Christopher Burbach / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Monday, June 20, 2016 12:15 am

Omaha cyclists are so enthused about a new trail through South Omaha that they are celebrating the fact that most of it is almost done.

The South Omaha Trail will connect the Keystone and Papio Trail networks with the Field Club Trail, providing the first off-road connection between west Omaha and Millard and midtown Omaha.

Bike commuters and recreational cyclists can hardly wait. More than 30 people, including Omaha City Councilman Chris Jerram, showed up in 95-degree heat for a ride that the advocacy group Omaha Bikes organized on a recently opened portion of the South Omaha Trail.

It doesn't go all the way to the Keystone yet. But it's getting closer.

"There's a phase that's done, a great piece of the puzzle," said Pell Duvall, executive director of Omaha Bikes.

That portion begins at the southern end of the Field Club Trail at Vinton Street, near 35th Street. The trail goes under Interstate 80, winds up to 36th Street and swoops down to D Street before rising up toward 42nd Street.

It currently ends at 42nd Street.

Construction work continues to pave a path under 42nd Street at D Street. From there the trail will climb to 45th and Dayton Streets, where it will meet the previously completed first phase of the South Omaha Trail. When that happens, the South Omaha Trail will be fully connected to the Keystone Trail at Karen Park, 62nd and H Streets.

The \$3 million trail is a joint project of the City of Omaha and the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District. The Papio NRD is paying the construction costs. The city paid much of the land acquisition and design costs.

The connection has been in the works for a decade.



South O bike trail

City Councilman Chris Jerram, in front, on a recent ride organized by the nonprofit Omaha Bikes to show off a newly completed section of the South Omaha Trail.

Construction started last year but is several months behind schedule because of a rainy 2015 and the unexpected need to move a major gas line along D Street. It is on target for the new completion date of Sept. 30, city officials say.

“Then we’ll really have some trail connections to celebrate,” Duvall said.

The city recently opened the Vinton-to-D Street portion, although some fencing, tree planting and other work remains to be done.

Dennis Bryers, an Omaha Parks and Recreation Department planner, advised caution while biking, hiking or jogging the section. There could be construction equipment there, and the city has received complaints of dirt bikers and ATVs sneaking onto the trail, on which motorized vehicles are banned.

“Be aware of your surroundings and of the work going on,” Bryers said.

Duvall organized the rolling peek at the newly completed section.

Jerram rode along. Straddling his bike at the meet-up point on the Field Club Trail, Jerram said, “This has been so long in coming that people are celebrating incrementally.”

Cyclist Denise Lauritsen said afterward that she’s eager for the trail to be completed and wanted to ride the new portion with knowledgeable people.

She approved of the mile-long section that was recently opened.

“It’s very nice,” Lauritsen said. “They put a lot of thought and detail into it.”

She lives in Papillion. She rides with friends on the Keystone and Papio Trail networks, often between downtown Papillion and Bellevue.

She anticipates recreational riders such as herself will use the South Omaha Trail to travel into midtown, close to bike lanes into downtown Omaha that lead toward the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge into Council Bluffs and Iowa trails.

“I am so excited to see that (South Omaha) trail open,” Lauritsen said. “It will get you safely to the bike lanes and get you downtown and anywhere else you want to go.”

Her anticipation matches the mood of cyclists from whom Duvall has heard. The turnout for last week’s steamy out-and-back ride (albeit sweetened with the possibility of cold beer at the end) buttressed that impression.

“We had over 30 people show up in 95-degree weather just to go for a ride,” Duvall said. “It’s a step in the right direction, and it’s important to recognize it and all the people who have worked on it over the years.”

Contact the writer: 402-444-1057, christopher.burbach@owh.com

Constituents, officials remember Scott Japp as 'a strong voice for the people'

By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Monday, June 20, 2016 5:20 pm

People in Washington County were reeling Monday after learning of the death of Scott Japp, a longtime resident who had served as the county's representative on the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District for nearly eight years.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office announced late Sunday that Japp, 60, had died in a farm machinery-unloading accident.

Japp was known as an aggressive advocate for his rural constituents, which often led him to spar with fellow board members and NRD staff.

Carl Lorenzen, chairman of the Washington County Board, said taxpayers in the four rural counties Japp represented appreciated his thoroughness and his questions.

"People wanted him to do the job he was doing," Lorenzen said. "They don't want a rubber stamp. They want him questioning."

Japp was seeking a third term on the board. In the May primary, he received 45 percent of the vote in a three-person race. He had been set to face fellow Arlington resident Bill Rhea in the general election.

Officials at the NRD and the Nebraska Secretary of State's Office were reviewing state election law Monday. They weren't immediately certain whether a temporary replacement would be appointed to his seat or whether his name would appear on the November ballot.

Japp, a Washington County native, was first elected to the NRD board in 2008 on a platform of keeping dams out of Washington County. He was re-elected in 2012 to represent Subdistrict 1, which includes parts of Washington, Burt, Thurston and Dakota Counties.

"He was very popular," said Lorenzen, who said he'd known Japp for his whole life. "There's no doubt about it."

Outside Japp's subdistrict, his adversarial style often frustrated fellow board members and NRD staff,



Scott Japp

Scott Japp died Sunday in a farm accident at age 60.

who thought he made unfair accusations about the resources district.

Twice, his fellow board members voted to censure him. And the district sued him in 2014, asking a judge to prevent him from interfering in a dam project. After construction was underway, the district dismissed its complaint.

Earlier this year, Japp told The World-Herald that he was running for a third term because he wanted to continue to advocate for taxpayers.

“I’m probably the only representative on that board that’s representing the people, not like the other board members that are representing special interest groups and receive donations from engineering firms and law firms and companies that represent the NRD,” he said then.

Some other board members acknowledged that they disagreed with him but said they were sorry to hear of his death.

The NRD issued a statement Monday: “We at the NRD were saddened to learn of the passing of Director Scott Japp. ... Scott had been a strong voice for the people of Subdistrict 1. His background knowledge of soil construction and agriculture was a great asset to the NRD. He was a very active board member and always tried to look out for the NRD’s mission of soil conservation. We send our condolences to the family and the community on his passing.”

Richard Scott Japp was born Dec. 27, 1955, and graduated from Arlington High School. He received a bachelor’s degree in agriculture from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Japp was involved in several business ventures, Lorenzen said. One was working for the family business, Japp Brothers Grading.

In his personal life, Japp was compassionate and humble, Lorenzen said.

“Scott had done very well in his business life,” he said. “But you’d never know it by the car he drove or how he dressed.”

Survivors include his mother, Mayone Japp; sister, Pamula Japp of Bennington; and brothers, Lonny Japp of Bennington, Reid Japp of Bennington and Matt Japp of Kennard. He was preceded in death by his father, Richard L. Japp.

A memorial service is set for 10 a.m. Thursday at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Bennington. Visitation will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at Campbell Aman Funeral Home in Blair.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1084, roseann.moring@owh.com

Omaha World Herald Public Pulse/June 22, 2016

Japp a tragic loss

The citizens of Washington County are mourning the death of Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board member Scott Japp (“Controversial Papio NRD board member killed in farm accident,” June 20 World-Herald).

He loved the county he represented and used his intelligence when fighting the ridiculous spending of the NRD. He fought for the common farmer against the unneeded dams in Washington County.

His death is a tragedy for the people he represented.

Linda Madsen, Blair

Name of NRD board member Scott Japp, who died in a farm accident, won't appear on November ballot

By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Thursday, June 23, 2016 1:00 am

Scott Japp's name will not appear on the November ballot for the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District board after his death earlier this week.

Japp was running for a third term on the board, representing parts of Washington, Burt, Thurston and Dakota Counties, as well as a small portion of northern Douglas County.

Japp, 60, died Sunday in a farm accident. He'd won 45 percent of the vote in a three-person primary race in March. Fellow Washington County resident Bill Rhea also advanced to the general election.

Now Rhea's will be the only name on the ballot, unless someone else petitions to add their name before Sept. 1.

Meanwhile, the NRD board could decide at its July 14 meeting whether to appoint someone to fill the vacancy or wait until the election fills it.

If the board members decide to fill the seat, applications would be sought and the board would vote to appoint an applicant.

The desires of the rural constituents of Subdistrict 1 are often at odds with the NRD's more urban Douglas and Sarpy County residents, and Japp often clashed with the other board members and NRD staff.

Rhea has said he is running in part to express constituents' wishes in a less adversarial way.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1084, roseann.moring@owh.com



Scott Japp

Scott Japp died Sunday in a farm accident at age 60.

PMRNRD board to discuss Japp's vacant seat at July meeting

- Washington County Pilot Tribune – June 24, 2016/By Jessica Gibbs

The Board of Directors for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (PMRNRD) will discuss at its July 14 board meeting how, when and if it will fill the seat of Director Scott Japp, who was killed in a bulldozer accident June 19.

PMRNRD General Manager John Winkler said that the board must first decide if it wants to fill the seat before the general election in November. If so, directors will discuss what process they'll follow to do so.

Choosing to fill the vacancy could mean the board allows time for individuals to apply for the position, Winkler said.

"The board will probably discuss and then take action at the July board meeting," Winkler said.

Japp, a rural Arlington resident, was killed June 19 while attempting to unload an antique bulldozer from its trailer.

Japp arrived at the property of his brother, Matt Japp, around 9 a.m. While unloading the bulldozer, the machine lurched forward and pinned Japp between it and the rear of a pickup truck. Rescue departments arrived at about 5:30 p.m., where Japp was pronounced dead on scene.

Japp was running for his third term as the Subdistrict 1 representative on the PMRNRD board of directors. Subdistrict 1 includes Burt, Thurston, Dakota, and Washington Counties, and a portion of Douglas County.

Japp won his race in the primary election, earning 45 percent of the votes. Bill Rhea Jr. of Arlington followed with 40 percent while Chad Scebold of Bennington received approximately 15 percent of the votes.

Rhea, who would have been Japp's challenger in the general election, said he has not made any decisions about applying for the opening if the board chooses to fill it.

Japp and his brother, Matt, are Rhea's neighbors.

"Kind of put everything on hold for a little while," Rhea said.

Laura Strimple, Nebraska assistant secretary of state, said Japp's name will not appear on the November ballot. Rhea will remain the only candidate for Subdistrict 1 unless someone petitions to be on the ballot, she said.



YOUR TOWN GOVERNMENT/BLAIR CITY COUNCIL, JUNE 28

BY KATIE ROHMANN • editor@enterprisepub.com

City to build stormwater detention facility, subdivision road

THE ACTION

The council approved 7-0 the plans for a stormwater detention facility at 19th and Front streets and authorization to go out for bids. Council member Chris Jensen, Ward 1, was absent.

THE DETAILS

Bids are due Aug. 2. The contractor will have 30 calendar days to finish the work once it is started. Director of Public Works Al Schoemaker expects the project to be done by the end of October. The area will usually be "grassy" because it's dry, he said. The city may potentially fill the area with water during the winter for a public ice skating rink.

THE COST

Engineer's total cost estimate: \$96,136
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District pledge: \$30,000

THE ACTION

The council unanimously approved paving of Grant Circle, a road that will serve the 10-lot Crowell Subdivision, and other public improvements: sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water main design.

THE DETAILS

Design and construction of public improvements is expected to be done in 2016 to allow house construction on the platted lots to begin later this year.

THE COST

Design, construction management and geotech services: \$54,500

Sarpy County wants your feedback on plan update, trails

By Emily Nitcher / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, June 29, 2016 1:00 am

The Sarpy County Planning Department is seeking feedback on the county's comprehensive plan update and trails plan.

A public workshop will be held Thursday from 6 to 8 p.m. at Papillion-La Vista South High School, 10799 Highway 370. The workshop will be in the cafeteria.

Those who cannot attend Thursday's meeting can provide feedback by taking the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/SarpyCountyCompPlan.

Outdoors

Kramper Lake offers great fishing promise

Larry Myhre lfentfish@msn.com

06.29.16

HUBBARD, Neb. | The tiny red and white bobber tipped over on its side and then zoomed under the water as yet another bluegill inhaled my 1/64th-ounce jig.

"I just love the way bluegills fight," I told my boat partner, Gary Howey of Hartington, Neb., "If they weighed six pounds I don't think you would ever land one."

This little guy was exhibiting the trademark fight of his kind. Bluegills turn their broad sides to the pressure of the line and somehow swim in tight circles which can test the mettle of your 4-pound-test line.

We were fishing Kramper Lake, the centerpiece of the new Danish Alps State Recreation Area just a mile or so southeast of Hubbard, Neb.

The lake opened to fishing last July after heavy rains the previous year filled the 226-acre reservoir. The lake was first stocked in 2012 and has had two more stockings since then.

Well-stocked with bass, bluegill, crappie, walleye and channel catfish, the lake is tucked into over 500 acres of parkland featuring more than 70 gravel pads for RVs and 22 tent-camping sites. Camp sites are complete with 30 and 50 amp electricity hookups, water, shower houses and equestrian facilities. A picnic table and fire ring is located at each campsite.

Our boat was tied up to one of the many trees which line the now submerged Jones Creek. Although many of the trees are in over 30 feet of water, we were taking bluegills within a foot or two of the surface. Sunken trees attract most gamefish, including walleyes. We were told that a 17-inch walleye had been caught on a crankbait in the trees the week before.

The trees are only part of the ample structure built into the lake. Before it filled, several brush piles, shoals, rock piles, reefs and other structures were installed. Coordinates are provided in a brochure which will enable anglers to find them with their GPS units.

All things considered, this could be one of the best small-reservoir fishing sites anywhere.

We had begun the day working the weedline looking for bluegills, largemouth and crappies.

We weren't disappointed.

With surface water temperatures hovering in the 80-degree range, I eased the boat along the shaded sides of the weeds.

I was surprised to learn that weeds grow as deep as 14 or 15 feet on many areas of this lake. That tells me that the water clarity is super and that the three water quality basins and the associated wetland complex are doing their job of settling out any runoff silt.

We took bluegills and bass off the weeds, but only one crappie. Later as I was negotiating the boat under the 5 mph no wake limit I noticed a lot of suspended fish about 12 feet down.

"Those are probably crappies," I said. "I've seen them suspend like that in other small reservoirs during the summer."

The recreation area is a \$15 million dollar project of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District. It is managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission under a cooperative agreement. Other conservation agencies also partnered in the project.

The Danish Alps State Recreation Area is part of a comprehensive waterside plan which will provide flood and erosion control and other benefits in the 20,316-acre Pigeon/Jones Creek Watershed in Dakota County.

The area takes its name from the early Danish settlers who populated the area in the late 1800s. The surrounding hillsides reminded them of their homeland.

The lake is named for Vince Kramper, a longtime conservationist and farmer in Dakota County. Kramper, who has retired from farming, served on the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources board for 30 years and worked on this project for over 12 years.

The boat ramp is on the west side of the lake and will accommodate two boats at a time. There are also two 40-foot docks, restrooms and a handicap-accessible parking pad near the ramp area. The lake was designed with both shore-bound anglers and boaters in mind. There's a breakwater on the west shore which includes a handicap-accessible fishing pier.

Since this is a state park, a park entry permit is required. A daily permit is \$5 and can be purchased on site. A season permit is \$26. Out-of-state boaters should also be aware that Nebraska now requires an aquatic invasive species stamp which must be attached to the rear/starboard side of your boat. The stamp is \$15 and can be purchased online.

The lake is encircled by two trails. One for hiking and the other for horseback riding.

The area promises to be a premier destination for not only fishing, but camping, hiking, horseback riding and other outdoor pastimes.



Larry Myhre, Sioux City Journal

Vince Kramper, longtime conservationist and retired farmer living in Dakota County, Neb., gave me a tour of the Danish Alps State Recreation Area just completed near Hubbard. Kramper served 30-years on NRD boards and worked on this project for 12 years. The 226-acre lake is named for him as a recognition of his work and devotion to conservation.



Larry Myhre, Sioux City Journal

Bluegills are providing plenty of fishing action right now on Northeast Nebraska's newest state recreation area. Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., displays one of the many bluegills we caught and released on a recent trip to Kramper Lake just outside of Hubbard, Neb.

Zebra mussel larvae have been found again in Zorinsky Lake

By Nancy Gaarder / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Friday, July 1, 2016 12:00 am

Bad news for Zorinsky Lake: Evidence of the invasive zebra mussel has again been found in the lake, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced Thursday.

One of the most aggressive species known to invade the U.S., the mussel typically damages infrastructure around a lake and upsets the ecosystem, causing fish populations to decline.

Its presence in the Omaha metro area has been limited to an isolated lake on Offutt Air Force Base. An infestation in Zorinsky would mean there would be no way to prevent mussels from escaping into the Papillion Creek system. The lake drains into the Box Elder Creek, then the West Branch of Papillion Creek, then the South Branch of the Papio and ultimately the Missouri River.

In 2010, when an adult mussel was discovered in the lake, the corps, which owns the lake, took the extraordinary step of draining as much of Zorinsky as possible in an effort to kill off the mussel and prevent an infestation from taking hold. While the effort appeared successful at the time, no one was celebrating. Officials knew at the time that it could re-emerge, either from a colony that survived the lowering, or from a fresh infestation.

This time around, an adult mussel has not yet been found. Instead routine sampling of the water tested positive for veligers, the microscopic larval form of zebra mussels, according to the corps.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the agency is acting quickly to get the word out, so that those using the lake over the holiday weekend know to take extra care.

With confirmation of the mussel, it becomes even more important that those putting boats in the lake clean, drain and dry them before leaving. Larval and adult zebra mussels can survive up to three weeks out of water with the right conditions, making it easy for them to be carried from lake to lake by a boat, according to Allison Zach with the Nebraska Invasive Species Program.

In a statement released by the corps Thursday, Dave Tunink with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission reminded boaters that Nebraska law makes it illegal to allow lake water to be transported between waterbodies.



Zorinsky Lake sunset

Lake Zorinsky

“Harvest fish need to be transported on ice in a cooler and baitfish need to be disposed of properly in the trash or water drained off and placed in a plastic bag and frozen for later use,” he said. “It is illegal to dump baitfish buckets into any water body.”

Williamson said the corps wants to quash any rumors that might circulate about actions it is contemplating at the lake.

There are no plans at this point to again drain the lake or treat it chemically, she said.

The Nebraska Invasive Species Program will have a technician at Lake Zorinsky Friday and Saturday to survey boaters and answer questions. Additionally, signs indicating that Lake Zorinsky is designated “suspect” for zebra mussels will be posted.

The zebra mussel is so pernicious, so prolific and so economically damaging that its arrival in the U.S. in the late 1980s led within a few years to the first significant national legislation tackling invasive species. Female mussels can produce 1 million larvae a year, with tens of thousands possibly surviving to adulthood.

Zebra mussels found at Zorinsky Lake in 2010 included some of the largest found anywhere in the U.S. up to that time. The typical mussel is about the size of a fingernail. The largest at Zorinsky was about 1.7 inches. Once they drained the lake, more than 900 mussels were found on the exposed bed.

Zebra mussels can damage the aesthetic qualities of a lake, with shells washing up along shores by the thousands. They feed at the base of the food chain, which alters the fish population, often depleting key species; they adhere to hard surfaces, clogging pipes, drains and docks.

On the flip side, zebra mussels aggressively filter water, so clarity in lakes improves and fish that feed by sight, such as bass, might benefit.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1102, nancy.gaarder@owh.com

* * *

HIGHLY INVASIVE PREDATOR

» First discovered in 1988 in the Great Lakes, the zebra mussel has hitchhiked its way, mostly on boats, throughout the Mississippi River watershed — including Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma and Kansas — and hop-scotched into Colorado and Utah.

» A female mussel can release about 1 million eggs in a single season. Eggs are free-floating in the water, where they are fertilized by sperm from male zebra mussels. If 2 percent are fertilized and survive to adulthood, that would result in 20,000 more mussels in the lake. Larvae can take eight to 240 days to reach adulthood.

» Zebra mussels can damage the aesthetic qualities of a lake, with shells washing up along shores by the thousands. They feed at the base of the food chain, which alters the fish population, often

depleting key species; they adhere to hard surfaces, clogging pipes, drains and docks.

» There would be no way to prevent mussels from escaping downstream of Zorinsky because the lake drains into the Box Elder Creek, then the West Branch of Papillion Creek, then the South Branch of the Papio and ultimately the Missouri River.

» On the flip side, zebra mussels aggressively filter water, so clarity in Zorinsky could improve, and fish that feed by sight, such as bass, could benefit.

» Why not rely on predators? The mussel is native to Europe and Asia, and has no serious predators in North America. A few duck, crayfish and fish species, such as catfish, prey on the mussel, but not enough to reduce its population.

Read more

Feb. 3, 2011: Zebra mussels – big trouble in a small package

Correction: The mussel was first discovered in the lake by a Boy Scout in 2010. A previous version of this article had the wrong year.



Engineers: Most South Creek parcels not in floodplain

City tables sending remapping request to FEMA

BY KATIE ROHMAN
editor@enterprisepub.com

The results from an engineering firm's study of a Blair tributary could mean 48 parcels will be fully removed from the floodplain.

During the Blair City Council meeting Tuesday night, engineers Bob Gregalunas and Lindy Rogers, co-owners of FYRA Engineering in Omaha, presented their findings from a floodplain study of an unnamed tributary — commonly known as "South Creek" — conducted at the City of Blair's request.

Dozens of properties were moved into the floodplain in 2012 after the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released new floodplain maps. Those property owners then had to obtain flood insurance.

Suspecting that FEMA didn't accurately conduct its survey that resulted in remapping, the city hired FYRA to conduct another survey.

Gregalunas told the Blair City Council on Tuesday night that 48 parcels of the 213 parcels within the 2012 floodplain limits should be fully removed from the floodplain.

"Eleven structures, we believe, will be in the floodplain once everything is done," Gregalunas said. Those property owners could see a "substantial reduction in flood insurance costs," he said.

Remapping of the floodplain could come at a critical time for some property owners.

The Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 slowed some flood insurance rate increases to policyholders hit by insurance premium increases in 2013 and early 2014.

On Oct. 1, 2013, the subsidized rates for pre-flood insurance rate map build-ups began to phase out. At renewal, nonresidential policyholders received a 25 percent rate increase. The rate increases are set to continue until rates reflect the property's true risk. Rates are at full premium in 2018.

Teri Pierce said her home on Butler Street almost sold until the buyer backed out because of the flood insurance costs.

"Our neighbor knew eight months before we did because their mortgage company was on top of it," Pierce said.

FEMA makes the ultimate decision whether to remap the South Creek floodplain. FYRA would submit a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) to FEMA. Once that is received, FEMA has 90 days to approve it and begin the remapping process.

Gregalunas said he's unsure how long remapping would take.

"It could be six months; it could be a year," he said.

He said he's "optimistic"

FEMA would approve it.

If remapping is approved and completed, mortgage companies may seek certification of elevation from property owners, who would have to pay for surveys to submit to the mortgage companies.

The South Creek study may be one of the first in the U.S. to be conducted using new hydrology, Gregalunas said.

"It is going to require more work to get it through on our end," he said.

In June, the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources Board of Directors approved contracting for an update of the Papillion Creek Watershed hydrology to provide new flood hazard information. This could potentially factor into floodplain mapping to be released by FEMA in 2019. The process could potentially remove thousands of structures from floodplains and keep others from being placed in floodplains.

Gregalunas said it is a good sign that South Creek area residents have not reported ever experiencing flooding on their properties. When asked what the likelihood is of flooding in the area, he said it's a "1 percent event" — also known as a "100-year flood" — in any given year.

Steve Jones, who lives on South 17th Street, where his property was moved from the floodplain to the floodway in 2012, said the study is "a step forward."

Holly Baker of South

17th Street asked if FEMA's remapping was "a mistake."

"I'm not saying it was a mistake so much as a conservative study," Gregalunas said.

He pointed out that an abandoned railroad grade over South Creek has caused water to rise where the parcels they believe are still in the floodplain are located. If the approximately 8-foot-wide structure is removed, that could prevent water from backing up there.

Gregalunas did not have a cost estimate for removal of the structure. Two or three landowners are adjacent to it.

The city council voted 7-0 to table authorization for submittal of the map revision to FEMA so the city can obtain a cost estimate for removing the abandoned railroad structure and to allow time to talk with its adjacent landowners. Council member Chris Jensen, Ward 1, was absent.

The city now requires that new housing developments have stormwater management. Rogers said Blair has "really progressive" stormwater management practices.

Before hiring FYRA to conduct the study, the city considered building a stormwater detention facility north of Hollow Road along U.S. Highway 30. The cost was estimated at \$3 million to \$4 million.



FILE / ENTERPRISE

Some property owners near this unnamed tributary, commonly called "South Creek," in Blair may be moved out of the floodplain if the Federal Emergency Management Agency approves a remapping request.

RESULTS OF FLOODPLAIN STUDY

- 213 parcels within 2012 floodplain limits should be reduced to 165 parcels within updated floodplain limits;
- 33 parcels do not have structures on them;
- 95 parcels have structures that don't fall within updated floodplain limits;
- 20 parcels have 100-year water surface depths of 0.5 feet or less;
- 12 parcels have 100-year water surface depths between 0.5 and 1 foot; and
- 5 parcels have water surface depths greater than 1 foot.

Source: "City of Blair South Creek Floodplain Modifications," FYRA Engineering, City of Blair and Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, June 28, 2016



THE PUBLIC PULSE

Corps should address flood risk

I agree with Kim Johnston's May 19 Public Pulse letter, "An amusing plan for the riverfront." The Omaha riverfront offers huge potential for development for the city, residents and visitors.

But before any investing occurs, there is a problem that needs to be addressed: flood control. The original Army Corps of Engineers' instruction manual was written to manage the Missouri River for flood control, hydroelectric power and navigation.

The manual was changed in 1994 to provide habitat for the pallid sturgeon, least tern, piping plover, recreation and mitigation projects constructed by the corps. This contributed to frequent years of flooding from 1994 to 2016.

Congress must instruct the corps to go back to its original manual. It was the way the river was intended to be managed after the series of dams and the federal levee systems were constructed. The flood of 2011 lasted more than four months and was the most destructive flood on the Missouri River in history. Any new floods would be just as costly and cause serious damage to any riverfront development.

Omaha spent millions protecting valuable properties, such as Eppley Airfield. Council Bluffs also spent millions.

E.J. Foral, Springfield



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FLOOD OF 2011

'Herculean effort' fended off a major disaster here

By NANCY GAARDER
 WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Five years ago today, a furious battle was underway to save western Council Bluffs from a failing levee near Veterans Memorial Bridge.

If the levee had broken during the historic summerlong Missouri River flood, it would have posed the single most significant threat to homes in the Omaha area. The homes of about 30,000 Council Bluffs residents were at risk.

For about three days around the clock, a line of trucks snaked its way to the levee, ferrying fill material to reinforce the collapsing berm, build a backup levee and plug the 60-inch subterranean pipe that was siphoning away the dirt.

It was among the many heroic efforts that summer that ultimately protected homes and businesses on both sides of the river. On the Nebraska side, the homes of 11,000 Omahans were at risk, as were such economic engines as Eppley Airfield and Offutt Air Force Base, plus one of the City of Omaha's sewage treatment plants.

Not everyone along the river was as fortunate as metro-area residents.

"The thing about the Flood



Greg Reeder



Bill Beal



Scott Brooks



John Bertino



MATT MILLER/THE WORLD-HERALD

In summer 2011, the Missouri River swelled more than 7 feet above flood stage in Omaha. Eppley Airfield was among the most endangered properties.

of 2011, you never really knew how close to disaster you were," recalled Greg Reeder, Council Bluffs' public works director.

Reeder said Council Bluffs' flood fight was guided by the words of then-Fire Chief Alan Byers, who headed the emergency response at the city level.

Reeder recalled that at the onset of the crisis, Byers said, "If this levee fails, it won't be for lack of effort. We will do everything we can to prevent it. It may not be enough, but we're not going to have a regret."

"That mindset helped us prepare mentally and to get through the process without second-guessing ourselves," Reeder said.

A similar philosophy guided the fight up and down the river.

Omaha airport officials decided early to "do anything and everything we needed to do to protect this airport and stay open," Executive Director Steve Coufal said in 2011.

Many of the heroes of 2011 most likely will remain unsung. But some accounts bubbled to the surface.

Bill Beal, a diver, worked in inky black, water-filled underground pipes. The work was crucial to plugging holes needed to protect Offutt Air Force Base.

"Everyone was super tense," he recalled after one of his most crucial dives. "There were a lot of serious people there. It had to get done."

City workers such as Scott Brooks, an electrician in Council Bluffs, suffered through heat, insects and filthy water to keep pumps and other equipment running. The entire levee and pump system along both sides of the river was being called upon to do something no one had envisioned — remain intact and functioning through more than three months of flooding.

Racing — and once wading in chest-deep water — to failing pumps was the story of Brooks' summer.

"There was just so much water coming in that the pumps couldn't handle it," he said. "Sometimes they'd go down like dominoes."

That summer, the river reached levels never seen in the modern, post-dam-construction era — more than 7 feet above flood stage in Omaha. Levees became sodden, and the pressure of groundwater was so great on the dry side of the levees that boils and sinkholes developed in fields, basement floors bubbled like artesian wells and geysers pushed through cracks in some concrete floors.

Surveillance teams flagged about 900 problems along levees in the metropolitan area. Some were animal holes that could be plugged easily. Others were more severe and remote, requiring helicopters that could hoist in mammoth sandbags. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alone spent nearly \$10 million shoring up levees in the Omaha area.

The problem near Veterans Bridge was discovered by Iowa National Guardsmen doing foot patrols there. So much of the levee had slid toward the river that the Guard worried for the safety of its patrolling troops.

The problem was so severe that the corps immediately took command, recalled Reeder of the Bluffs Public Works Department.

"They pretty much pushed us out of the way and said, 'This is bad, we're going to take care of this,'" Reeder said. "It was a monumental effort."

That's also how the corps remembers it.

"It was pretty dire," said John Bertino, chief of engineering for the corps' Omaha District. "It's hard to say how much time we had."

The summer of 2011, he said, "was a Herculean effort by all involved."

Contact the writer:
 402.466.1102, nancy.gardner@worldherald.com



- CHRISTOPHER BURBACH/THE WORLD-HERALD

Omaha City Councilman Chris Jerram, who helped make the South Omaha Trail a reality, rides a newly completed portion of the path.

A forward-looking city works to add, bit by bit, to its community amenities. An encouraging example is Omaha's progress in linking up its key bike trails.

As The World-Herald's Christopher Burbach reported, the recently opened portion of the South Omaha Trail points to the day when work soon will be completed for the final segment joining the Keystone and Papio Trail networks with the Field Club Trail.

Omaha city government and the Papio- Missouri River Natural Resources District have worked together on the \$3 million project. Local bike enthusiasts have praised the careful planning that went into the trail design.

When the final link is completed, Burbach wrote, the result will be "the first off-road connection between west Omaha and Millard and midtown Omaha."

It's no wonder bike commuters and recreational cyclists are giving a cheer.

Douglas County Board vote could increase spending, but leave property tax rate unchanged

July 12, 2016/By Christopher Burbach/World-Herald staff writer

The Douglas County Board could vote Tuesday on a 2016-17 budget that would increase spending slightly but keep the county's property tax rate the same for the third consecutive year.

The annual budget would spend \$390.4 million. That's \$17.5 million, or 4.7 percent, more than last year.

It would leave the county's property tax rate unchanged at a hair over 28 cents per \$100 in valuation, although the tax rate won't be set in stone until August, after final valuations are certified. That means the owner of a house valued for tax purposes at \$150,000 would pay about \$420 for the county portion of his property taxes.

The County Board will have a public hearing on the proposed budget Tuesday. The meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. in the Legislative Chambers of the Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam St. The board is expected to vote on the budget as well.

"It's a reasonable budget," said Mike Boyle, co-chairman of the County Board's Finance Committee. "In my estimation it's a little better than meeting the bare obligations."

The Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom advocacy group supports the proposed budget. Its president, Doug Kagan, and other leaders have attended weeks of open Finance Committee meetings led by Boyle and the committee's co-chairman, P.J. Morgan.

While saying the group's leaders see room for improvement in county finances, Kagan praised the board and County Budget and Finance Director Joe Lorenz.

"I think they did a really good job this year," he said. "They came in with a balanced budget and no tax increase. We were really proud of them."

The budget proposal includes revenue from a state-ordered valuation increase, even though the county is contesting the state order in court.

The Nebraska Tax Equalization and Review Commission ordered Douglas County to increase 2016 residential property values by 7 percent through large swaths of central and western Omaha. The commission also ordered the county to decrease residential property values by 8 percent in a portion of northeast Omaha.

Lorenz estimated the orders would generate about \$1.25 million in additional revenue for the county in the 2016-17 budget year, which runs from June 30 of this year to June 30 of 2017.

For budgeting purposes, county officials decided to assume the revenue from the state-ordered increase would come in, despite the county's pending lawsuit asking for the order to be overturned, Lorenz said.

"We talked about it with the attorney, and at this point it (the state order) is a formal ruling," Lorenz said. "We can't count on being successful" in the lawsuit.

Lorenz said the main drivers of additional spending were rising health care costs for county employees, an additional \$1.45 million for the Election Commissioner's Office because of a general election this November and a mayoral election in May, and \$565,000 more for capital improvements.

A raise for County Board members would add \$22,000 to the 2016-17 budget. The raise takes effect in January.

The board voted in January to increase board members' salaries by 34 percent over two years. The salaries would increase to \$43,594 in 2017 and then to \$49,884 in 2018.

Board members Morgan and Mary Ann Borgeson voted against the raise. Boyle originally joined Jim Cavanaugh, Clare Duda, Marc Kraft and Chris Rodgers in supporting the raise. Boyle later changed his mind and proposed rescinding the raise, but no other commissioners changed their votes and the motion failed on a 3-3 vote, with Kraft absent.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1057, christopher.burbach@owh.com, twitter.com/chrisburbach

Fred Conley's presence on Metro college board could cost school millions in federal funding By Emily Nohr & Christopher Burbach/OWH staff writers

Metro Community College could lose eligibility for millions of federal dollars if board Chairman Fred Conley doesn't resign, documents obtained by The World-Herald show.

The U.S. Department of Education notified the college that it will no longer be eligible to receive federal funds as long as Conley remains on the board, Metro officials said.

Last month, Conley was banned by another federal agency from participating in federal contracts. The ruling, called a debarment, stemmed from claims that he failed to disclose a potential conflict of interest while serving on the Omaha Housing Authority board.

Conley could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

In its letter, the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Office said an institution's "administrative capability" is impaired if an institution's principal, such as a board member, is prohibited from participating in federal contracts.

Metro received more than \$25 million from the federal government in 2014-15, with the majority coming from Title IV education funds, the main source of federal student aid.

If a board member has been debarred by a federal agency, a school "must remove that person from such a position in order to retain its administrative capacity, and, hence, its eligibility" to receive federal student aid program funds, according to the letter dated June 30.

Neither the Metro administration, nor its board, has the authority to remove an elected official from office — an official must resign voluntarily, said Metro Executive Vice President Jim Grotrian and the school's general counsel, James Thibodeau. Conley's continued presence on the board jeopardizes the school's access to federal funding, they said.

"That conclusion has been clearly communicated to him," Thibodeau said. "Any decision regarding (a) resignation has to be made by him."

Metro has until Aug. 8 to respond to the Department of Education's letter.

Losing federal funding would be devastating for the college, board member Steve Grabowski said.

"We would have to figure out some way to regenerate that kind of money in order to keep the college functioning," he said. "We could raise taxes, but I'm sure you know how well that would go over if we would even mention that."

No formal request has been made of Conley to resign, board Vice Chairman Roger Garcia said. The board is working to find out what the letter means and if there are negative repercussions for Conley's continued membership on the board, he said.

"I could say that my hope is that there would be no risk to the college, but at the moment we're just trying to fully understand the situation," Garcia said.

Conley and David Domina, the attorney who represented him in the OHA matter, said in June that they didn't expect the debarment to have an effect on his service as a member of the Metro and Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District boards.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD also receives federal funding. Seven percent of its funding in 2016 came from the federal government, according to the agency's website.

John Winkler, the NRD's general manager, said the agency had not heard from the federal government. He said the NRD receives different types of federal funding than do the housing authority or Metropolitan Community College.

"We haven't heard or seen anything that would raise a red flag for our agency," he said.

But the agency will seek a legal opinion.

“We’re having our legal counsel review the situation to make sure we’re not jeopardizing any current or future funding,” Winkler said.

In May, a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, administrative judge issued an order prohibiting Conley from participating in federal contracts for three years.

Conley, a former Omaha City Council member, served on the OHA board from 2009 to 2013. During that time, HUD conducted a wide-ranging audit of the housing authority’s business.

One thread of that audit led HUD to seek penalties against Conley last year. The government alleged that Conley had a conflict of interest because of his relationship with the Davis Cos., whose businesses include an insurance brokerage that does business with OHA.

Conley had a free cubicle in the offices of Davis Cos. He used an email address with a Davis Cos. identification.

The government said Conley should have disclosed his relationship with Davis Cos. It also said Conley had a conflict of interest because he was on both the OHA board and the board of a nonprofit corporation, Collateral Guarantee Fund Inc., and did not disclose that.

That corporation signed a contract in 2010 to rent space atop OHA apartment towers for low-frequency radio transmitters for a radio station. But the contract didn’t require the station to pay any money to the housing authority.

Conley contended last year that he didn’t have any conflict of interest and didn’t believe that he needed to disclose his relationship with Davis Cos. or Collateral Guarantee Fund.

He said people at OHA knew about the email address because he used it to communicate with them. He said he used the cubicle for his volunteer activities in coordinating a jazz festival.

Conley has said he made no money from the Collateral Guarantee Fund’s contract with the housing authority and had nothing to do with the contract.

The HUD administrative judge found that Conley had a duty to disclose his relationship with the Davis Cos. and did not fully do so, but the judge also said HUD had not shown that Conley had a duty to disclose his contract with Collateral Guarantee Fund.

Conley, who has served on Metro’s board since 2005, is running for re-election to the board in November.

Members of the 11-member body serve four-year terms and govern the college, set policy, approve the budget and set the local college tax levy. Metro serves more than 26,000 students and has several campuses.

Board members are not paid but can be reimbursed for certain expenses, such as mileage.

It’s unclear whether the board will discuss the issue at its next meeting, July 26. The agenda is set by Conley, the board chairman, and by Metro President Randy Schmailzl.

Conley’s membership on the board also could play a role in Metro’s ongoing recertification of its eligibility to qualify for financial aid funds, Grotrian and Thibodeau said. Conley’s debarment is a “major factor” that the Department of Education will consider, which could delay or jeopardize the college’s recertification, they said.

Grabowski said he would “certainly” resign if he were in Conley’s situation. Board member Linda McDermitt agreed.

“If it were me, and I knew I would jeopardize the college, I’m guessing between \$25 and \$30 million in aid, I think I would step down,” Grabowski said. “That’s all there is to it.”

Added McDermitt, “It would be a tragedy” to lose the money.

“It’s extremely difficult. I know that, but we have to remember why we’re there and that is to provide college for students, and we can’t do that if our hands are tied.”

Contact writers: 402-473-9581, emily.nohr@owh.com 402-444-1057, christopher.burbach@owh.com

Douglas County Board OKs \$390.2 million budget; property tax levy unchanged

- By Christopher Burbach / World-Herald staff writer / 7-13-16

The Douglas County Board voted Tuesday to approve a \$390.2 million budget for 2016-17.

The vote was unanimous, 7-0. The budget would keep the county's property tax levy unchanged at a smidgen over 28 cents per \$100 in valuation, although the board won't formally set the levy until late August.

That means the owners of a house with a \$150,000 valuation for tax purposes would pay about \$420 for the county portion of their property taxes.

County Board Chairwoman Mary Ann Borgeson called it a "sound budget" and thanked department heads and elected officials.

"These are still hard times for local governments, and we appreciate all the cooperation and hard work that has been done on this," Borgeson said.

The budget adopted by the board Tuesday was slightly smaller than the proposed spending package, after amendments.

One amendment included reducing spending by about \$282,000 to the Omaha Public Library and other municipal libraries in the county. That spending is calculated in a per capita rate based on the population of unincorporated Douglas County. Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert's proposed 2016 annexation will reduce that population.

Another amendment allotted an additional \$125,000 to the Douglas County Sheriff's Office budget. County Board member Clare Duda proposed that amendment. Despite the declining population in unincorporated Douglas County because of City of Omaha annexation, the city continues to rely on the Sheriff's Office to respond to calls in annexed areas, Duda said.

With the amendment, the Sheriff's Office budget was set at \$15.65 million, slightly less than the previous year's \$15.7 million.

County Board Member P.J. Morgan, co-chairman of the board's finance committee, said that the county's property tax levy would remain unchanged for the third straight year. He said the board has only increased the tax levy once in the past six years.

Overall, the budget increases Douglas County spending by \$17.2 million, or 4.6 percent, over the previous year.

The budget proposal includes revenue from a state-ordered valuation increase, even though the county is contesting the state order in court.

The Nebraska Tax Equalization and Review Commission ordered Douglas County to increase 2016 residential property values by 7 percent through large swaths of central and western Omaha. The commission also ordered the county to decrease residential property values by 8 percent in a portion of northeast Omaha.

County Budget and Finance Director Joe Lorenz estimated that the orders would generate about \$1.25 million in additional revenue for the county in the 2016-17 budget year, which runs from June 30 of this year to June 30 of 2017.

The Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom endorsed the budget. The advocacy group's president, Doug Kagan, was the only person from outside government to speak at the public hearing Tuesday.

"Good job, county commissioners," Kagan said.

He suggested changes in county budgeting and spending processes, but praised the budget and county officials.

"The citizens of Douglas County are fortunate to have a county government willing to share information so transparently with the public and welcome our input," Kagan said.