

Agenda Item: 11.

Memorandum

To: PPO Subcommittee
From: Amanda Grint, Water Resources Engineer
Date: March 1, 2012
Re: Review and Recommendation for NRCS Farm and Ranch Protection Program Application for Allwine Prairie/Glacier Creek Expansion Project

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed in January 2007 to establish the benefit of combining resources with the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO), the District has been working with UNO on the Glacier Creek Project to establish a wetland and stream channel mitigation bank on the 80 acres east of Allwine Prairie. In May 2011, the Board approved a cost share of \$370,000 District dollars toward the purchase of an additional 76 acres north of Allwine Prairie (see attached map for north viewshed). UNO has approximately \$480,000 from a Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant available to go toward the acquisition, but have only until June 1, 2012 to spend the funds. The purchase price of this land is still in negotiation but the current estimate is \$1,823,000.

In order to utilize UNO's remaining available Nebraska Environmental Trust funds and the District's contribution, the entities have been working diligently to obtain this parcel by June 2012. There is an opportunity to apply for a federal grant through the NRCS, Farm and Ranch Protection Program (FRPP), which has an application deadline of April 1st. The FRPP is a voluntary program where the landowner is compensated for an easement over the land in order to keep it in an agricultural use and not allow it to be developed. Through discussions with the NRCS, it has been determined that the District would be best suited as the applicant for the FRPP funds and subsequent holder of the conservation easement.

The current property owner, Heritage, LLC. is at this time reluctant to be a co-applicant and enter in to an agreement for the conservation easement. But due to timing of the application, staff requests Board approval to authorize an application for the NRCS Farm and Ranch Protection Program if the property owner is willing. An alternate possibility of a private 501 3 (c) corporation, such as the University of Nebraska Foundation, purchasing the property and being a co-applicant with the NRD is being investigated. Under this arrangement an FRPP application would be delayed, but it is likely staff would be bringing an agreement with UNO and the Foundation to the Board for consideration in April.

Staff recommends that the Subcommittee recommend to the Board that the General Manager be authorized to apply for NRCS Farm and Ranch Protection Program funding for the 76.16 acres north of Allwine Prairie as part of the Allwine Prairie/Glacier Creek Expansion Project.

Glacier Creek Project

27 February 2012

For questions, contact htrage@umn.edu
(402-980-7089)

Red = Approximate outline of Heritage property

Black = Boundary of Allwine Prairie, including area purchased in 2010.

Blue = Boundary of Kobs' property (planned for future purchase)

Yellow (dashed) = Approximate boundary of the area planned for acquisition in 2012.



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