

MEMORANDUM

TO: THE BOARD

SUBJECT: General Manager's Report

DATE: November 2, 2012

FROM: John Winkler, General Manager

A. **INFORMATION/EDUCATION REPORT:** The I & E Report detailing Information and Education activities for the month of October r 2012, is attached for your review.

B. **PERSONNEL/MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:**

1. The National Association of Conservation District's 2013 Annual Meeting will be held on January 27-30, 2013 in San Antonio, Texas. Director's interested in attending should contact the Chairperson for approval, then Jean Tait for scheduling. The program information and schedule is attached for your review.
2. Gerry Bowen will present an update on the South Omaha Trail Project.
3. The General Election Results is attached for your review. Congratulations to Scott Japp - Subdistrict #1; Curt Frost - Subdistrict #3; Rich Tesar - Subdistrict #5; Patrick Leahy - Subdistrict #7; Patrick Bonnett - Subdistrict #9; and Ron Woodle - Subdistrict #11. Departing Board Members will be recognized for their service at the December Board of Directors Meeting.

C. **REPORT ON PURCHASES – CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY:** Pursuant to Board direction, attached is a report indicating construction services, professional services and personal property purchases for the month of October 2012. Please review this report and contact me if you have any questions.

D. **CURRENT AND ON-GOING PROJECTS – P-MRNRD LEGAL COUNSEL:** Attached is a copy of the current and on-going projects for District Legal Counsel, Paul Peters, as of October 15, 2012. I would ask Directors to review this listing. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

E. **PAPILLION CREEK WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP REPORT:** There was no PCWP Meeting for the month of October. The next Partnership meeting is scheduled to be held on November 15, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. at the NRC.

F. **NEWS CLIPS:**

- ✓ October 20, 2012 Lincoln Journal Star article, Plans set for new Sarpy County Lake
- ✓ October 22, 2012 Omaha World Herald article, Natural resources districts buying 15,000 acres for water
- ✓ October 23, 2012 Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Koenig is right for Papio-NRD
- ✓ October 23, 2012 Douglas Co. Post-Gazette, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Subdistrict 1, 5, and 9 (Candidates' profile information)
- ✓ October 24, 2012 Omaha World Herald Article, Pipeline will boost Republican, Platte River flows
- ✓ October 24, 2012 Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Trails are a focus of NRD Board
- ✓ October 24, 2012 Papillion Times Article, Around Sarpy, Construction starts for new flood control lake
- ✓ October 24, 2012 Bellevue Leader, Meet the Candidates for Down Ticket Races, Papio-Missouri River NRD Board of Director's – Subdistrict 11
- ✓ October 27, 2012 Omaha World Herald Editorial, Mix old, new for Papio NRD
- ✓ October 27, 2012 Omaha World Herald Article, NRD will search for new general manager
- ✓ October 29, 2012 Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Clark would add to NRD board
- ✓ October 31, 2012 Sioux City Journal Star Letters, Support Chris Koenig for Papio NRD
- ✓ November 1, 2012 Blair Enterprise Letter to the Editor, Scott Japp re-election needed on Papio NRD
- ✓ November 1, 2012 Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Leahy has ideas for NRD board
- ✓ November 5, 2012 Omaha World Herald Editorial, Innovative approach
- ✓ November 6, 2012 Omaha World Herald Article, Platte River plan fails irrigation district's engineering review
- ✓ November 7, 2012 Omaha World Herald Article, With barge season ending, dam releases will be cut by two-thirds

October, 2012 Information/Education Report

Information

- Continued work on Flood Control brochure
- Held groundbreaking for WP-5 Reservoir
- Finalized interpretive sign for W. Maple Access site
- Updated Web site
- Updated Facebook page
- Continued working on Spectrum Newsletter
- Continued archiving slides and b&w prints
- Worked on scripting for 2013 Info Campaign
- Attended Public Relations Society annual conference
- Gave presentation to Trout Unlimited group

Education:

Programming Schedule:

- 10/2-** Catlin Nature Club- Snake talk-21 students (9 yrs. old)
- 10/3-** Millard South High- Geocaching- 5 programs- 89 students
- 10/4-** Millard South High- Geocaching- 4 programs- 70 students
- 10/5-** Sandoz- Animal Adaptations- 2 programs- 45 students (4th grade)
- 10/5-** WET workshop- Fontenelle Forest- 11 participants
- 10/6-** WET workshop- Fontenelle Forest- 11 participants
- 10/8-** Norris Pre-school- Nature Hike- 53 kids
- 10/8-** Millard South-Nature Hike- 3 kids
- 10/8-** Holy Name Nature Club- Bird Nests- 20 students (1st-8th grade)
- 10/9-** Catlin Nature Club- Skulls and pelts- 21 students (3rd Grade)
- 10/10-** Joslyn Elementary- Geocaching- 2 programs (5th grade)
- 10/11-** East/Central NE Land Judging- 245 students (high school)
- 10/11-** Sandoz Elementary tiger explorers- Geocaching- 37 students (3rd-5th grade)
- 10/16-** Sandoz Elementary—GPS/Geocaching-53 students (4th grade)
- 10/16-** Catlin Nature Club- Lizards- 21 students (3rd Grade)
- 10/17-** Crestridge Elementary School- Groundwater- 2 programs- 58 students (5th Grade)
- 10/18-** Crestridge Elementary School- Enviroscape- 2 programs- 58 students (5th Grade)
- 10/19-** Millard South Teacher Service Day- Nature Hike- 26 teachers
- 10/19-** Home school- Insect/nature hike- 13 students- (pre-K- 6th grade)
- 10/22-** Millard South High- Geocaching- 2 students
- 10/22-** Sandoz Elementary—Owl Pellets—53 students (4th grade)
- 10/23-** Morton Nature Club- Pellets/recycling- 26 students (4th grade)
- 10/23-** Rockwell Elementary- Animal Adaptations- 3 programs- 53 students (2nd grade)
- 10/24-** Lewis and Clark Middle School- Tree/water hike- 13 students (6th-8th grade)
- 10/25-** Sandoz Cub Explorers- Turtle Talk- 32 students (K-2 grade)

10/29- Holy Name- Lizards- 13 students

10/29- Millard South High- Owls- 3 students

10/30- Neihardt Elementary- Reptiles/amphibians- 2 programs- (3rd grade)

Meetings:

10/20- NAI Committee Meeting- Fontenelle Forest

10/23- Statewide I&E Meeting Conference Call

10/29- Prairie Construction about Aviaries

10/30- Envirothon Committee Conference Call

Planning

- Fall programming—November/December scheduling
- MORE Nature Meetings & Nature Nights

Unofficial General Election Results
November 6, 2012
(Taken from the Nebraska Secretary of State Office – 11/7/2012)

<u>District 1</u>	Votes	Percent
Scott Japp	10,952	54.75%
Chris J. Koenig	9,052	45.25%

<u>District 3</u>	Votes	Percent
Brandon Clark	9,458	49.70%
Curt Frost	9,572	50.30%

<u>District 5</u>	Votes	Percent
Brad Dunbar	9,263	41.13%
Rich Tesar	13,258	58.87%

<u>District 7</u>	Votes	Percent
Patrick Leahy	11,067	52.82%
Jim Powers	9,887	47.18%

<u>District 9</u>	Votes	Percent
Patrick Bonnett	19,867	100%

<u>District 11</u>	Votes	Percent
Gus Erickson	8,532	45.27%
Ron Woodle	10,316	54.73%

National Association of Conservation Districts



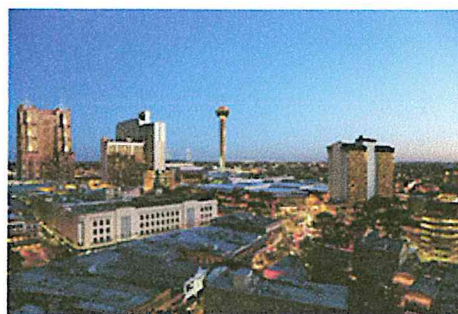
NACD's mission is to serve conservation districts by providing national leadership and a unified voice for natural resource conservation.

2013 NACD Annual Meeting

NACD 2013 Annual Meeting • January 27-30, 2013 • San Antonio, TX

NACD's 2013 Annual Meeting will be held at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in beautiful and historic San Antonio, Texas.

Based on theme, "Conservation: Proud Past, Positive Future", the 67th Annual Meeting will showcase the conservation work of districts and partners over the years as well as what can be done in the future. The conference will offer a wide range of informative sessions and networking opportunities, in addition to a Conservation Expo showcasing the latest programs, products and technologies in conservation from partners across the country.



The NACD Board of Directors will meet before and during the conference, setting association policy.

Individuals and districts also will receive national recognition at the conference for their outstanding efforts in their respective communities. Information about nominating national award winners can be found on the awards page.

Over the course of the meeting, attendees will have the opportunity to learn and network with peers, attend partner meetings, visit with NACD's Conservation Expo exhibitors, participate in another record-setting Live Auction and see local natural resource challenges through great conservation-focused tours.

Be sure to keep checking back. Additional resources will be added as they become available.

NACD • 509 Capitol Ct. NE • Washington, D.C. 20002 • P: 202.547.6223 • F: 202.547.6450 • [Contact Us](#)



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

67th Annual Meeting

January 27-30, 2013

San Antonio, TX

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Spouse: _____
(Please list only if attending)

Badge Name: _____ District or Organization Name: _____

☐ District Official ☐ District Employee ☐ State Association Employee ☐ State Agency ☐ Federal Agency ☐ Other

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

☐ This is my first time attending an NACD Annual Meeting.

☐ I give NACD permission to release my mailing address to the NACD Conservation Expo Exhibitors for post-conference follow-up.



Please list any ADA Accommodations/Dietary Requirements: _____

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

Registration Type	Early Bird Before Nov. 30, 2012	Regular Dec. 1, 2012-Jan. 14, 2013	Onsite After Jan. 14, 2013
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Registration	\$445	\$495	\$550
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Registration Plus Appreciation Dinner Ticket	\$510	\$565	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Single Day Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Mon. <input type="checkbox"/> Tues. <input type="checkbox"/> Wed.	\$350	\$350	\$350
<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse Registration (includes same as regular registration; must be in addition to a regular registration)	\$145	\$145	\$145
<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse Registration Plus Appreciation Dinner Ticket	\$205	\$205	\$205

Conference Registration includes entry into the Conservation Expo, Welcome Reception, NACD General & Concurrent Sessions, Monday's Leadership Lunch, Reception and Live Auction. All events require an NACD badge for entry.

TICKETED EVENTS/TOURS – Open to All

Qty	Event	Date	Price
	Auxiliary Hosted Event: Relive the Alamo at the Rivercenter IMAX*	Sat, Jan 26	\$25(\$30 onsite)
	NCDEA Hosted Tour: Aquarena Springs*	Sun, Jan 27	\$60(\$70 onsite)
	NCDEA Hosted Tour: Comel Winery*	Sun, Jan 27	\$60(\$70 onsite)
	Texas Night: Buckhorn Museum and Saloon Dinner and Dancing*	Sun, Jan 27	\$85
	Presidents' Association Breakfast (<i>current and past state presidents</i>)	Tues, Jan 29	\$40
	Auxiliary Breakfast	Tues, Jan 29	\$40
	NCDEA Hosted Partnership Lunch (<i>open to all, must register</i>)	Tues, Jan 29	\$55
	Auxiliary Hosted Tour: Natural Bridge Caverns and Historic TX Town*	Tues, Jan 29	\$60(\$65 onsite)
	NACD Appreciation Dinner	Tues, Jan 29	\$75
	NCDEA Hosted Workshop* (<i>no cost, but must give # if attending</i>)	Wed, Jan 30	\$0

*See descriptions on the annual meeting website, which can be found at <http://nacdn.net.org/events/annualmeeting/>.

Total Amount \$ _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION

☐ Amex ☐ MC ☐ Visa ☐ Check# _____ ☐ PO# _____

CVV# _____ Name on CC _____ Credit Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Completed forms and payments may be faxed to (202) 547-6450 or mailed to NACD, P.O. Box 791206, Baltimore, MD 21279.

REGISTRATION POLICIES

Conference registration includes entry into the Conservation Expo; Welcome Reception; NACD General & Concurrent Sessions; Monday's Leadership Lunch, Reception and Live Auction; NACD Training Sessions and NACD Workshops. All events require a NACD badge for entry.

A separate form must be completed for each registrant.

Payment is required prior to processing registration.

Credit card and purchase order registrations may be faxed to 202-547-6450. Completed forms with payment can be mailed to NACD, PO Box 791206, Baltimore, MD 21279.

Early Bird Registration is defined as registration and payments received before November 30, 2012.

Regular Registration begins December 1, 2012 and ends January 14, 2013.

DO NOT mail or fax registration forms after **January 14, 2013**. After this date, you must register onsite.

Special Assistance Needs: If you have any needs addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or dietary requirements, please contact Jamii Roberson at 202-547-6223 x101 or by email at jamii-roberson@nacdnnet.org by January 7, 2013, so that we can accommodate your request.

Registration Confirmation: Confirmation letter will be sent via email soon after you register. If you do not receive your confirmation, please contact Jamii Roberson at 202-547-622 or jamii-roberson@nacdnnet.org. Your confirmation is your receipt for the meeting; please keep it for your records.

REGISTRATION CANCELLATION POLICIES

Refund/Substitution Policy: Cancellations, substitutions and requests for refunds must be submitted in writing to jamii-roberson@nacdnnet.org before January 7, 2013 in order to receive a refund. An administrative processing fee of \$100 will be deducted. Partial refunds of registration fees after January 14, 2013 will not be refunded except in extenuating circumstances that are clearly beyond the control of registrants, such as airport or road closures for weather or extreme immediate family emergencies. In this case, a written request must be provided. All approved refunds will be processed six to eight weeks after the meeting. For questions concerning your refund, please contact Jamii Roberson at 202-547-6223x101 or by email at jamii-roberson@nacdnnet.org. Returned checks are subject to a \$50 administrative fee.

REGISTRATION HOURS OF OPERATION

The NACD Annual Meeting Registration will be located in the Ballroom Foyer.

Saturday, January 26	12:00n-7:00pm
Sunday, January 27	7:00am-6:00pm
Monday, January 28	7:00am-7:00pm
Tuesday, January 29	7:00am-6:30pm
Wednesday, January 30	8:00am-12:00n

HOTEL AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Location: The meeting will take place at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. Please note there are two Marriott Hotels in San Antonio, and this meeting is being held at the Marriott Rivercenter.

101 Bowie Street. San Antonio TX 78205
Tel: 210-223-1000
Fax: 210-223-6239

Rates: The room rate for a single/double room is \$179 per night plus taxes. This rate may be available three days prior to the meeting and at the conclusion of NACD's meeting based solely upon the hotel's availability.

Guestroom tax in San Antonio TX is currently 16.75%.

Reservations: To reserve your room, please call 201-223-1000 and identify yourself as a registrant with the National Association of Conservation Districts Meeting or "NACD". You can also make reservations online at: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/NACDannualmeetingnng>

The deadline to reserve rooms is Monday, January 7, 2013.

The hotel does not provide shuttle service.

Parking:

On-site parking, \$25 daily
Valet parking, \$33 daily

Airport Shuttle:

Airport Express
\$18 one way; reservation required; call 210- 281-9900

Taxi:

Estimated fare: \$22 one way

VIA Metropolitan Transit:

Goes to downtown stops on the Lower Roadway. Located at Arrivals Level of Terminals A&B, across the marked crosswalk to outer curb. Route 5 runs daily to downtown within half an hour; costs about \$1.10. VIA's streetcar service takes over from that point. Call 866-362-2020 for information.

NACD 2013 ANNUAL MEETING - BASIC SCHEDULE	
Subject to Change	
Friday, January 25	
1 - 5 pm	NACD Executive Board Meeting
All Day	Possible Partner Meetings
Saturday, January 26	
All Day	Partner Meetings
Throughout Day	NACD Resource Policy Group Meetings
7:30 am - 12:30 pm	NACD Executive Board Meeting
10 am - 12 pm	New NACD Board Member Orientation
12 - 7 pm	Registration Open
1 - 4 pm	NACD Board Meeting
4 - 6 pm	Resolutions Committee Meeting
7 - 9 pm	Auxiliary Hosted KickOff Event
Sunday, January 27	
8:30 - 9:15 am	Inspirational Program
7 am - 6 pm	Registration Open
9:30 am - 12:30 pm	NACD Committee Meetings
11 am - 4 pm	NCDEA Hosted Tours
1:30 - 2:30 pm	NACD Board Meeting
2:45 - 4:45 pm	NACD Region Board Meetings
Throughout Day	Partner Meetings
2 - 6 pm	Conservation Expo Hall Open
5 - 6 pm	Opening Reception
7 - 10 pm	Texas Night Event
Monday, January 28	
7 am - 7 pm	Registration Open
7:30 - 8:30 am	Coffee Break
7:30 am - 12 pm	Conservation Expo Hall Open
8:30 - 10:30 am	Opening General Session
10:45 - 11:45 am	Share Fair
12 - 2 pm	Leadership Lunch
2 - 5 pm	Conservation Expo Hall Open
2:30 - 5 pm	Breakout Sessions
2:15 - 2:30 pm	NACD Board Meeting
2:45 - 5:30 pm	NACD Resolutions Hearings
6 - 7 pm	NACD Pre-Auction Reception
7 - 9 pm	NACD Live Auction

Tuesday, January 29	
7 - 8:30 am	NCDEA Meeting
7 - 9 am	Presidents' Association Breakfast Meeting
7 am - 6:30 pm	Registration Open
7:30 - 8:30 am	Coffee Break
7:30 - 9 am	Auxiliary Breakfast Meeting
7:30 am - 1 pm	Conservation Expo Hall Open
9 - 11 am	General Session
11:30 am - 1 pm	NCDEA Hosted Partnership Lunch
1:30 - 4:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
1:30 - 5:30 pm	NACD Board Meeting
11:30 am - 5:15 pm	Auxiliary Hosted Tour
Throughout Day	Partner Meetings
6 - 7 pm	Reception
7 - 9 pm	Appreciation Banquet
Wednesday, January 30	
7 - 9 am	PLC (Principle Legislative Contact) Breakfast
8 am - 12 pm	Registration Open
8:30 - 11:30 am	NACD Board Meeting
9 am - 12 pm	Workshops
1 - 3 pm	NACD Board Meeting if needed
1 - 4 pm	NACD Executive Board Meeting
Throughout Day	Partner Meetings
(afternoon)	Possible Tour

Report on Purchases

Construction Services, Professional Services, Personal Property

October, 2012

[illegible]

Updated: October 15, 2012

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 = PFP's Portion Completed

- **Little Papio:** (Cleveland)
 - ⊕ Bucky's easement (ingress) at 76th & Dodge Street (N)
- **Big Papio:** (Cleveland)
 - ⊕ Interlocal Agreement with Papillion on Fricke ditches and culverts (W)
- **West Branch:** (Cleveland)
 - Land Exchange with Sarpy Co. (96th St.) (P)
- **Western Sarpy Dike:** (Cleveland)
 - Saunders County side ROW agreement and easements (F)
 - NRDs/NE-ARNG Interlocal for Camp Ashland Property (P)
- **Floodway Purchase Program:** (Laster)
- **Trail Projects:** (Bowen)
 - Mo Pac (Springfield to Platte River) drainage repair easements (N)
- **Missouri River Corridor Project:** (Becic)
- **USDA PL 566 Projects, Silver Creek and Pigeon/Jones Watershed:** (Schumacher/Cleveland)
 - Papio W-3 Eminent Domain (Camden) (F)
 - Papio W-3 Access-Quiet Title Action (W)
 - Pigeon Creek Watershed Site 23 and Weir Structure Easements (W)

- **Papio Watershed Dam Sites:** (Grint/Laster/Bowen)
 - ✪ Interlocal agreement with Douglas County for DS-15A (W)
 - Interlocal agreement with City of Omaha for DS-15A (P)
 - ✪ Zorinsky Basin #1 – purchase agreements, deeds and easement (W)
 - ✪ Exchange Agreement with Eurich’s for WP-5 ROW (W)
 - ✪ DS-15A Contract with HDR (W)
 - ✪ DS-15A purchase agreements, deeds and easements (N)
 - ✪ DS-15A flooding easement language for appraiser (N)
- **Papio Creek Watershed Partnership (Stormwater):** (Grint)
- **Missouri River R-613 and R-616 Levees:** (Cleveland/Henkel)
 - R-616 culvert agreement with Offutt (N)
- **Rural Water Projects:** (Sklenar)
 - ✪ Blair/NRD Interlocal Agreement on relocation of WCRW #2 water mains (N)
- **Other:**
 - ✪ Voluntary Integrated Management Plan Contract with Olsson Associates (Henkel) (W)
 - ✪ Review Glacier Creek/Heritage Agreement w/UNO (Grint) (N)
 - Review contract with Beehive Industries (Henkel) (N)

Plans set for new Sarpy County Lake

Lincoln Journal Star 10-20-12



Courtesy image

A drawing showing the new, 135-acre West Papio Basin #5, to be installed near 132nd Street and Cornhusker Road in Sarpy County
October 20, 2012 8:00 am • [By the Lincoln Journal Star](#)

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District plans to build a new 135-acre lake, surrounded by an additional 335 acres of parkland, near Werner Park Stadium between Lincoln and Omaha.

The district recently awarded a \$14.5 million contract to Hawkins Construction Co. to build the West Papio Basin No. 5 Flood Control Reservoir and related outdoor recreational features near 132nd Street and Cornhusker Road in Sarpy County.

"The reservoir will help protect lives and property downstream along the West Branch Papillion Creek, including the cities of Papillion and Bellevue," NRD General Manager John Winkler said.

Engineering studies have shown the Sarpy County area is in dire need of additional flood protection, the district said in a news release.

"In addition to the construction of the flood-control reservoir, we will also be building a hiking/biking trail, boat ramp, picnic shelters, upstream water quality structures to protect the lake from sedimentation and a Lincoln Road extension and bridge," Winkler said.

This multipurpose flood control and outdoor recreation project is the first to be built under the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership's watershed management plan. Established in 2001, the partnership includes representatives from Omaha, Papillion, Bellevue, Gretna, Boys Town, Ralston, LaVista, Sarpy County and the NRD.

The organization has a mission to address issues related to flooding and water quality in the 402-square-mile Papillion Creek Watershed in Douglas and Sarpy counties. Once completed, NRD officials said, the project will offer significant flood prevention for the West Branch Papillion Creek area.

"Our goal is to offer sustainable flood protection over the entire Omaha metro area," Winkler said. "The Papio NRD, along with our watershed partners, must continue to pursue additional resources necessary to provide adequate flood control and water quality structures that will save lives and property and preserve our quality of life."

Opening is planned for 2015.

Natural resources districts buying 15,000 acres for water

Omaha World-Herald 10-22-12

ALMA — Four southwest Nebraska natural resources districts plan to spend \$83 million to take 15,000 acres of irrigated farmland in southern Lincoln County out of service.

The districts plan to redirect the groundwater that has been used to water those acres to increase flows in the Republican and Platte rivers.

The Lower Republican, Upper Republican, Middle Republican and Twin Platte natural resource districts approved the plan on Friday at a meeting in Alma.

The districts will spend about \$5,500 per acre going to a single farm group that owns 10,000 acres in the Republican River basin and 5,000 acres in the Platte River basin. The four districts will share equally in the cost. — AP

W-H Public Pulse 10-23-12

Koenig is right for Papio NRD

Residents of northeastern Nebraska will vote for a representative on the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District for Subdistrict No. 1.

I highly recommend Chris Koenig. He has what it takes to be a leader. He is an Eagle Scout and a civil engineer, which could help the board on advice and experience on the many conservation projects the NRD does.

Chris has board experience, works for a common solution and knows the right questions to ask. He has experience working with various state and federal agencies, has project management experience and knows how to delegate the work and follow up.

He has the ability to communicate project goals. Koenig will listen to the people, ask questions, maintain contact with us, have fiscal responsibility and help the NRD function within its means. He is a people-person and a leader. Chris Koenig would be a great representative for us.

Vince Kramper, *Dakota City, Neb.*



Papio Missouri River Natural Resources District Subdistrict 1

Scott Japp

4752 County Road 15
Arlington, Nebraska

Incumbent: Yes, I have represented Washington, Burt, Thurston, Dakota and a small portion of Douglas County for the past four years.

Party Affiliation: Republican

Family: Single

Education: Graduate, Arlington High School, 1974; Bachelor of Science, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1978

Occupation: Businessman, in the transportation industry; consultant for construction projects; farming and ranching interests

Other elected offices held: None



1. Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this office?

District #1 predominantly encompasses the rural area of the PMRNRD. Therefore, my efforts have and will continue to concentrate on my constituents' interests in the preservation of natural resources. I respect property rights and will fight hard to preserve them. I have not and will not vote to use eminent domain to acquire property. I will continue to work hard to control spending by voting against budget increases and unnecessary spending/bond issuance. My voting record reflects these fundamentals.

I will work for you, not special interests. Unlike my opponent, who is an employee of HDR Engineering (the benefactor of millions of dollars in engineering contracts with the PMRNRD), I have had no business affiliations with the Papio-Missouri NRD.

2. What issues do you believe are most important to your potential constituents and how would you address them?

I believe unnecessary spending by government entities is a critical issue that has to be addressed and controlled. It is time for taxpayers, through their elected representatives, to gain control of how their property taxes are being spent. As your PMRNRD representative, I will continue to work hard to bring to light areas of unnecessary spending and will continue to fight against tax increases. For example, I will continue to vote against the proposed multi-million (almost a billion) dollar dam building projects that have been promoted as a flood control when I believe other less-costly and less-intrusive alternatives can accomplish the same result. My voting record will continue to reflect my attempt to minimize unnecessary government spending.

Chris Koenig

5773 Glen Oaks Drive
Fort Calhoun, NE 68023

Incumbent: No

Party Affiliation: Republican

Family: Married, two children, and two grandchildren, and one due in December

Education: Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering, UNL

Occupation: Engineer, senior project manager

Other elected offices held: None

Professional and community involvement: American Water Works Association, Water Environment Federation, American Consulting Engineers Council, American Public Works Association, Omaha Engineers Club. Previous community involvement: Habitat for Humanity, various fundraisers, president of the Usher's Club, parish council of two churches, Cub Scout leader, soccer coach, religious education teacher, treasurer for parish organizations, fish fryer and part of the cleanup committee for Lenten fish fries



1. Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this office?

I bring the following to the position of NRD Director: 1) project design and management experience on a wide variety of projects including levees, rural water systems, recreational trails, stream channel restoration, site development and grading projects; 2) previous board experience, including a national board; 3) the ability to find common ground on challenging projects that allows projects to move forward; and 4) the ability to frame technical concepts in common language that is easy to understand. My project work experience closely aligns with the types of projects being developed by the PMRNRD and I have the management experience necessary for the Board oversight. Website: www.koenigforNRD.com.

2. What issues do you believe are most important to your potential constituents and how would you address them?

1. Protection of resources. The main purpose of the NRD is protection of the resources of the land, including wetlands, streams, forests and wildlife. My objective as director will be to meet with the various conservation groups, communities and residents to discuss what challenges they are facing and how the NRD programs can meet these challenges.

2. Government transparency and communication. I will keep accessible to my constituents by electronic media, regular news articles and meetings. I will be responsive to the questions and concerns raised by my constituents.

3. Effective use of tax dollars. I am a fiscal conservative and will evaluate expenditures accordingly. I will be mindful that my decisions affect the amount of taxes my neighbors pay.



Papio Missouri River Natural Resources District Subdistrict 5

Brad Dunbar

16131 Bedford Ave
Omaha, NE 68116



Incumbent: No

Party Affiliation: Republican

Family: Wife, Courtney; daughter, Addison, 9

Education: Eustis High School; Bachelor of Science in Mechanized Systems Management, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; graduate of the first class of the Nebraska Water Leaders Academy, January 2012

Occupation: Regional manager, Lindsay Corporation

Other elected offices held: None

Professional and community involvement: Career working in agri-business; enjoyed projects that foster land betterment and cooperation with the local NRD, several of which include ground-well abandonment and tree planting for ecological sustainability

1. Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this office?

I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not have full respect and interest in core issues pertaining to a natural resource district. My unique upbringing provided opportunities to gain a comprehensive understanding of the vital connectivity of environment, agriculture, community and economy as it pertains to a sustainable ecosystem. Natural resource districts play a tremendous role in maintaining balance of environment, agriculture, community and economy through the designation of resources.

My upbringing, education and experiences allow me to effectively serve the NRD comprehensively. I have a sincere desire to be actively engaged, fully understanding all issues in which the board addresses. I would like to see more visibility with interlocal agreements the NRD has made and the use of funds in these projects.

2. What issues do you believe are most important to your potential constituents and how would you address them?

There are many issues facing the NRD for which I find interest; however, I believe the following are of primary concern: 1) development agreements between jurisdictions and developers concerning floodwater mitigation planning; 2) planning for soil conservation; and 3) education and awareness surrounding the role that NRD policies and action play in promoting environment, agriculture, community and economic development.

Rich Tesar

28700 Platte River Plaza
Waterloo, NE 68069



Incumbent: Yes, 20 years NRD director

Party Affiliation: Republican

Family: Wife of 40 years, Mary; sons: Jake, and Zack and his wife, Joelle

Education: University of Nebraska-Omaha, Bellevue College

Occupation: Semi-retired hunting and fishing outfitter, seminar speaker, Rich Tesar Outdoors

Professional, religious and community affiliations: Community of Grace Church, Elkhorn, Administrative Team member; Nebraska Association of Resource Districts, Board member and Legislative Committee member; Nebraska Association of Resource Districts Health Insurance Pool, Board member; Nebraska Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force, member and committee chair; Sokol Camp Association, Board president; "Get Hooked on Fishing" youth instructor; Ducks Unlimited; and Second Amendment "Right to Bear Arms" Legislation

1. Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this office?

I believe I am the best candidate for the NRD Board because of my 20 years of leadership and advocacy on the most important issues facing the NRD, namely cost-effective flood control for the Papillion Creek watershed and our rivers, and developing trails and public access sites on the Platte and Elkhorn Rivers. I am experienced in working with other governmental agencies and individuals to accomplish these goals. I was appointed to the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force by Governor Heineman. This Task Force, comprised of State senators and experts in fields related to wildlife, forestry, river habitat and water quality issues, is to determine the best approach to control the invasive vegetation that is finding its way into the State's waterways.

2. What issues do you believe are most important to your potential constituents and how would you address them?

Flood control and taxes, I believe, are the most important issues to my constituents. The 2011 Missouri River flooding has re-emphasized the importance of flood control. Providing meaningful flood control in the Papio watershed is needed, as this watershed is the most dangerous in Nebraska. With continued development, the flood risk continues to increase as every new street, rooftop and parking lot contributes to additional stormwater runoff into the watershed. I support the construction of multi-purpose reservoirs, combined with low impact development. I have been assertive in my "no tax increase" position on the NRD Board. I am pleased that since 2009 there have been no increases in the mill levy under my leadership as chairman of the Finance Subcommittee.



Papio Missouri River Natural Resources District Subdistrict 9

Patrick Bonnett

4979 South 132nd Avenue
Omaha, NE 68137



Incumbent: No

Party Affiliation: Republican

Family: Single

Education: BGSGA:
Concentration in Real Estate &
Land Use Economics

Occupation: Insurance and
financial consultant for 17 years

Other elected offices held: None

**Professional and community
involvement:** I support the Red Cross, YESS, St. John
Vianney Catholic Church and the American Legion; served
nine years in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve; former
president-elect of the Millard Business Association; former
vice president of Future Omaha; founder of Conservative
Coalition of Nebraska, Nebraska TEA Party

1. Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this office?

I believe that I am the best candidate for this office
because I have the educational and professional
background required for such service. I'm committed to
our community and to the mission of the NRD.

2. What issues do you believe are most important to your potential constituents and how would you address them?

The NRD constituency should be most concerned about
our dams, dikes and other flood control structures that are
in immediate need of re-certification as per FEMA
regulations. These structures play an important role in flood
control and are important to any property owner who may
be required to pay for flood insurance. Property taxes,
responsible stewardship of tax dollars, transparency, and air
and water quality are also important issues for the NRD. I
will immediately move to expedite re-certification and repair
of our dikes to prevent property damage due to flooding.

No Opponent

Pipeline will boost Republican, Platte River flows

By *David Hendee*

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Omaha World-Herald

A new pipeline is planned in Nebraska, and this one will carry water.

In a landmark announcement Tuesday, four natural resources districts said they plan to use groundwater from idled irrigated farmland to boost flows in Nebraska's Republican and Platte Rivers. The water would otherwise be consumed by corn, potatoes and soybeans.

The natural resources districts in central and southwest Nebraska have signed a contract to purchase a 19,518-acre farm south of North Platte. The districts plan to shut down the operation's 115 center-pivot irrigation systems and pump underground water to enhance flows in the two water-starved rivers that have been the focus of interstate legal wrangling for decades.

The purchase price is \$83 million, and Nebraska irrigators will pick up the tab. The seller is Lincoln Farm, a group of out-of-state investors. The sprawling irrigated farm was previously owned by New Mexico and Texas cattleman Don Oppliger.

Much of the property will be reseeded to rangeland.

The historic project is unprecedented in the state and will benefit all Nebraskans by not draining the state's economy or taxpayers' wallets, said Dean Edson, executive director of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts in Lincoln.

Nebraska taxpayers are ultimately liable for potential damages that could be levied against the state for not complying with a 1943 agreement with Kansas and Colorado on sharing water in the Republican River. Kansas has sued Nebraska for using too much water and currently is seeking financial damages and other actions — such as, possibly, shutting down irrigation across hundreds of thousands of acres near the Republican — to ensure that Nebraska complies.

Although the pipeline project would not affect Kansas' latest lawsuit against Nebraska — now before a special master of the U.S. Supreme Court — it would go far in providing more than enough water to overcome the worst shortfalls Nebraska has experienced in the Republican River, said Nate Jenkins, a spokesman for the Upper Republican Natural Resources District.

“Taxpayers everywhere have an interest in the state staying in compliance with the (Republican River) compact,” Jenkins said.

A significant amount of engineering design must still be completed, but it is expected that the project could add a total of roughly 45,000 acre feet of water to the rivers in years when

needed to maintain compliance with both the Republican River Compact and the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program.

That volume of water is about the amount a city of 100,000 residents would use in 5½ years. One acre-foot equals 325,851 gallons.

In the Platte, NRDs are responsible for returning the basin to water supply-and-demand conditions that existed in 1997 and ultimately improving them.

In addition to the Upper Republican NRD in Imperial, the other districts are the Middle Republican at Curtis, Lower Republican at Alma and Twin Platte at North Platte.

The districts moved quickly to pursue the project because the land was on the market. The deal came together in the past month, Jenkins said.

The NRDs are forming an interlocal agency and expect to contribute equally to the cost. Landowners in each NRD would be levied an occupation tax of about \$4 to \$6 per irrigated acre to pay off the project.

State law authorizes NRDs to levy occupation taxes on irrigated land to be used to help enhance stream flow.

Jasper Fanning, general manager of the Upper Republican NRD, said the plan would satisfy Kansas' demands without sacrificing the livelihoods of Nebraskans in the region.

“The Republican and Platte Rivers will be better off with this project, groundwater resources will be protected, interstate demands will be met and the ag economy won't be at the mercy of outside forces.”

Brian Dunnigan, director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, said the plan demonstrates that the state is committed to complying with its interstate agreements and sustainably managing natural resources.

The purchase is contingent on the NRDs securing financing. Jenkins said no hurdles are expected. The districts expect to close on the purchase within the next several weeks.

The 15,800 irrigated acres on the property will be retired from irrigated production. About 10,400 of the irrigated acres are within the Middle Republican NRD; the remaining 5,360 irrigated acres are in the Twin Platte NRD.

That “saved” groundwater could be transported via pipeline to a Republican River tributary such as Medicine Creek, and to the South Platte. Possible pipeline lengths will vary, but about 17 miles of pipeline will be needed to transport water to both rivers.

Contact the writer:

402-444-1127, david.hendee@owh.com

W-H Public Pulse 10-24-12

Trails are a focus of NRD board

I am a newer bicyclist on the trails around Omaha. I have been surprised at the extensive use of our trail system by runners, walkers and bikers.

The trails are a tremendous resource for the area. The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District is a large funder and organizer of bike trail projects.

Jim Powers is running for the NRD in District 7. Jim is an avid bicyclist and has ridden most of the trails in the Omaha area.

We need board members who use the trails and understand the importance of their maintenance and development. I support Jim Powers for the NRD.

Christopher J. Huerter, *Omaha*

Around Sarpy

Construction starts for new flood control lake

PAPILLION — The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District broke ground Tuesday on West Papio Basin No. 5 Flood Control Reservoir, which will be a new lake and recreational area near 132nd Street and Cornhusker Road.

The 135-acre lake northwest of Werner Park and near two proposed new housing developments would be surrounded by 335 acres of public parks.

The project is the first of its kind built under the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership's watershed management plan. The partnership, established in 2001, is made up of Papillion, La Vista, Bellevue, Gretna, Ralston, Omaha, Boys Town, Sarpy County and the NRD.

"The reservoir will help protect lives and property downstream along the West Branch Papillion Creek, including the cities of Papillion and Bellevue," NRD General Manager John Winkler said in a press release. "Construction of this reservoir is a result of many years of coordination between the NRD and our Papillion Creek Watershed partners."

The opening of the recreation area is planned for 2015.

Meet the Candidates for Down Ticket Races

We asked the local candidates in several races — those for Metropolitan Utilities District Board of Directors (two at-large seats), Learning Community Coordinating Council, Educational Service Unit No. 3, Metropolitan Community College Board of Governors and the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Board of Directors — to explain why voters should vote for them in 150 words or fewer. Here is what they said:

PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS — SUBDISTRICT 11

Gus Erickson

As an incumbent NRD Director I have a solid working knowledge of the NRD and area needs, enhanced by my educational background in soil and water conservation. As a 49-year Bellevue resident and former Bellevue City Councilman I have developed positive working relationships with state, county and local governmental agencies and organizations, Bellevue City Council, staff and management, and local business owners. I have a proven ability to network these

various parties together toward consensus and achieving goals.

I serve on the NRD Personnel, Legislative and Public Affairs Committee as well as an alternate on the Programs, Projects and Operations Committee; this allows me to study our tax dollars at work. Staying within our budget has allowed us to keep our tax levy stable over the last 5 years, a trend I wish to continue.

I wish to continue serving on the NRD Board in this capacity.

Ron Woodle

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts were created to protect natural resources along major watersheds. Reportedly the 2013 Papio-Missouri River NRD budget outlines spending at approximately \$87 million dollars. Given the current demand on taxpayers, fiscal responsibility needs to be restored to the NRD budget. Essential flood control projects should move forward, while cosmetic recreation ventures need reevaluation.

As a two term Sarpy County Commissioner,

I was the Budget Committee Chairman for six years. During those years the County levy was reduced which resulted in lower taxes. All the while infrastructure improvements were expanded and County services streamlined.

As a lifelong Sarpy County resident I would like to restore fiscal responsibility to the Papio-Missouri River NRD Board by applying budget processes that were successful on other civic boards I've been elected. Applying proven fiscal principles to the Papio-Missouri NRD budget process will yield prudent management and ultimately better efficiency of taxpayer funds.

W-H editorial 10-27-12

KOENIG, CLARK, TESAR, LEAHY, ERICKSON

Mix old, new for Papio NRD

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District is entering a critical time for its flood-control mission. It is beginning to implement measures that will protect residents in the Papio Creek watershed from the type of flooding that last year ravaged communities along the Missouri River.

As the operational arm of the Papio Creek Watershed Partnership, a cooperative of area governmental bodies, the NRD will carry out the projects necessary to protect the district that stretches from the South Dakota border to the Platte River in eastern Nebraska. Its weapons range from dikes and levees to water-containment dams, rain gardens and other lower-tech tactics.

The NRD board has been studying, planning and getting started on the process for years in an amicable, constructive way. Most of the current board members are thoughtful, open-minded and knowledgeable on not only water issues but also the other facets of NRD activities, such as hiking and biking trails. Therefore, we recommend re-electing incumbents, including Rich Tesar and Gus Erickson, as well as newcomers Chris J. Koenig, Brandon Clark and Patrick Leahy.

Subdistrict 1 is located along the Missouri River from the South Dakota border to north-central Douglas County. Koenig is a civil engineer who works on water and wastewater projects for HDR Inc. He is extraordinarily well-versed in the NRD's primary mission, was deeply involved in controlling the Missouri River flooding in Council Bluffs and Plattsmouth, Neb., in 2011, and is open to a range of flood-control solutions, farm-field terraces and swales, as well as dam projects.

Subdistrict 3, in northeastern Douglas County, would be best served by Clark, a senior auditor with Bank of the West and former Douglas County deputy auditor. He understands the dynamic interaction of urban development and increased floodwaters, carefully assesses programs before making a decision and is concerned about both transparency and the taxpayers' best interests.

Subdistrict 5 is in western and west-central Douglas County. It is ably represented by Tesar, an outfitter and fishing and hunting guide who has been an active and involved NRD board member for many years. Tesar shows a deep understanding of all the issues facing the NRD but is particularly cognizant of the threat posed to the district by Papio Creek flooding. He has initiated and promoted creation of several sites where boats, canoes and tubes can be launched into the Elkhorn River.

Subdistrict 7 is located in central Omaha surrounding Blondo and 72nd Streets. Voters there are fortunate to have two well-qualified candidates running for the seat. We lean toward Leahy, an Army reservist and military and environmental adviser to U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson. He has worked with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, among other organizations, and would bring that experience to the NRD board. Jim Powers, his opponent, is a local attorney who has legal experience in many of the areas with which the NRD deals, including land use and agribusiness.

Subdistrict 11 involves eastern Sarpy County and is represented by Erickson, a retired Air Force officer and former Bellevue Council member, who is active in both Kiwanis and the Douglas County Extension Foundation, of which he is a founding member. Erickson, who has an agriculture extension degree, was appointed not long before the 2011 flood. He plunged immediately into the work of protecting his district, personally walking dikes and levees to inspect for weak spots. He is interested in coordinating Bellevue's continuing flood cleanup with the NRD.

Voters in the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District would do well to cast their ballots for Chris J. Koenig, Brandon Clark, Rich Tesar, Patrick, Leahy and Gus Erickson.



NRD will search for new general manager

WORLD-HERALD NEWS SERVICE

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. — Central Platte Natural Resources District officials are ready to start selecting only the second general manager in the NRD's 40-year history.

Ron Bishop, who started with the district in 1972 when Nebraska's NRD system was born, will retire at the end of June.

Chairman Barry Obermiller of Grand Island said this week that the board's executive committee and Bishop plan to have four finalists by Jan. 14. Members of the budget committee will help interview the finalists, and he hopes to have a recommendation for the full board at its February meeting.

"It sounds like it's early," Obermiller said, but not if the first choice declines the position. The goal is to have a new general manager in place by June 1 to work on the transition with Bishop.

W-H public pulse 10-29-12

Clark would add to NRD board

While my service for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District is coming to an end, I'd like to tell voters about a solid candidate as a replacement.

Brandon Clark is a fellow veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Marine Corps. I know firsthand he has a good understanding of environmental issues and has increased his knowledge through college geology courses.

Clark is a product of north Omaha who will provide fair representation for a diverse District 3.

Larry Bradley, *Omaha*



LETTERS

Support Chris Koenig for Papio NRD

DAKOTA CITY | We in Northeast Nebraska are going to be voting for a representative on the Papio Natural Resources District Board for subdistrict one, usually referred to as NRD.

Chris Koenig is the person running for this position, which I highly recommend. Why? He has what it takes to be a leader. His start was as an Eagle Scout. He is a civil engineer, which would help the board on advice and experience on the many conservation projects the NRD works on. Chris has board experience, the ability to work for a common solution and knows the questions to ask. He has experienced working with various state and federal agencies, has project management experience and not only knows how to delegate the work, but follow up. Also, he has the ability to communicate project goals.

Koenig will listen to the people, ask questions, maintain contact with us, will have fiscal responsibility and live within our means. He is a people person and a leader. Chris Koenig would be a great representative for us.

Please vote Nov. 6, or sooner, for Chris Koenig for NRD.

- VINCE KRAMPER

Scott Japp re-election needed on Papio NRD

Letter to Editor

Posted: Thursday, November 1, 2012 3:25 pm

Scott Japp re-election needed on Papio NRD

To the editor

As our current Papio NRD Director, Scott Japp has worked hard for 4 years to provide assistance in the northern counties of the Papio NRD. Scott Japp supports conservation practices and low impact development; he has voted for the levy construction for the entire NRD District. Scott supports the City of Blair's levy construction and studies for protecting their water and wastewater treatment plants from future flooding issues. In June 2012, the City of Blair requested financial assistance for this project from the NRD. Scott Japp supported this request. His opponent, Chris Koenig, an engineer employed by HDR Engineering, attended this meeting and failed to testify on behalf of this project. HDR Engineering is the benefactor of millions of dollars from NRD projects and is the engineering firm for the City of Blair. Mr Koenig's affiliation with HDR is a conflict of interest. When questioned about his lack of independence, Koenig replied that he will abstain from voting on any HDR contract. So how can Koenig represent us, his constituents, when he cannot vote for or against any HDR contract? Scott Japp can be our voice on HDR contracts. We must re-elect Scott Japp so he can continue championing OUR interests not special interests.

Shawn Melotz, President, Papio Valley Preservation Assn

W-H Public Pulse 11-1-12

Leahy has ideas for NRD board

Please consider voting for Patrick Leahy for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board in Subdistrict 7. His years of experience working in a legislative environment, helping to resolve issues for Omaha and Nebraska, are unmatched.

I'm tired of national and local partisan politics. Patrick is a registered independent, someone who will think outside a red or blue box to do what's right for our community. We need that now more than ever.

I'm a veteran bicyclist who has enjoyed the trails in and around Omaha. My daughter and her boyfriend frequent them as well for a run with their dog. Some of these trails are in desperate need of repair, and we need more east-west options. Patrick Leahy has a plan that would do just that.

Because of his open-mindedness and experience, I am confident he'll join with the board to find a solution to the ongoing problem of flooding along Saddle Creek Road and other areas of the city.

Debbie Kraft, Omaha

Innovative approach

Omaha World-Herald

Four south-central Nebraska natural resources districts appear to have found an innovative way to have their cake and eat it, too — and the whole state could benefit.

The NRDs plan to buy a 19,500-acre farm that straddles the Platte River in Lincoln County south of North Platte and retire its 15,800 irrigated acres. They would then pipe the irrigation water to the Platte and Republican River basins to add much-needed flow to those streams. The \$83 million purchase would be paid off from an occupational tax on farmers in the four districts. The tax rate would run about \$4 to \$6 per irrigated acre.

The creative solution would not hit the state's economy or empty taxpayers' wallets, as could happen if the NRDs don't comply with water restrictions.

The purchase, still being finalized, would be a major step toward solving the very real problem of water shortages for irrigators in the Platte and Republican watersheds.

In the Platte, the NRDs must return the amount of water to 1997 levels to comply with federal guidelines and a three-state agreement to protect habitat and wildlife.

In the Republican, the river's NRDs must come up with enough water to make sure Nebraska complies with its 1943 compact with Kansas.

Kansas has sued in the U.S. Supreme Court to force Nebraska to keep its word. Indications from the special master handling the case for the high court have been that Nebraska could face far more painful requirements, such as shutting off many individual irrigation wells, a step that would harm the economies of small communities near the rivers. The NRDs and their irrigators commendably took a close look at potential consequences and came up with a better alternative.

An independent board will be set up to manage the 19,500 acres, more than 3,000 of which are not irrigated. The area likely will be reseeded to rangeland and could ultimately be used to graze cattle. Close monitoring of the board and its handling of the water will be important.

At least a quarter of the water from the land would be directed into the South Platte River, according to Twin Platte NRD general manager Kent Miller, although that could change depending on needs. Miller said he believes that is sufficient to fulfill a requirement that the NRD add enough water to the Platte system to equal the amount that existed there in 1997.

Miller also said that the NRDs' intent is not to financially penalize the school district, the county or any other taxing entity by taking the large farm off the tax rolls. He said if that happened, he expected that the agencies involved would compensate those districts in some way. Lincoln County board members and others had expressed concern for their tax base.

The land purchase may have seemed hasty to some, but the NRDs had to move quickly when the Lincoln farm came on the market. It is in the ideal location for the purpose, Miller said, because the divide between the Republican and Platte watersheds runs through it and piping water to either river wouldn't be so difficult.

"The Republican and Platte Rivers will be better off with this project," said Jasper Fanning, general manager of the Upper Republican NRD. "Groundwater resources will be protected, interstate demands will be met and the ag economy won't be at the mercy of outside forces."

The four NRDs have done well for themselves, their irrigators and the people of Nebraska.

Platte River plan fails irrigation district's engineering review

By Joe Duggan

WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Omaha World-Herald

LINCOLN — A key part of a creative idea to solve water shortages in the Platte River has failed an engineering review by the state's largest irrigation district.

Natural resources managers along the Platte have said stream flows could be boosted if the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District managed their project for groundwater recharge instead of surface water irrigation.

Under such a scenario, more efficient center pivot systems would apply groundwater to crop fields that currently receive surface water directly from the Platte.

Such a switch also has been billed as a way to help improve recreation at Lake McConaughy, situated along the North Platte River near Ogallala.

But when it comes to the state's largest reservoir, the proposal doesn't hold water, Mike Drain, Central's natural resources manager, said Monday. Central's internal review of the proposal's data showed McConaughy would drop further and fluctuate more under groundwater management.

"It doesn't seem — even based on their own data — that it would be a good thing for recreation," Drain said, after presenting his findings at Central's monthly board meeting near Ogallala.

Central holds the legal right to water stored in Lake McConaughy for the purposes of providing surface irrigation to more than 100,000 acres of land in south-central Nebraska.

A "pre-feasibility study" by the Central Platte and Twin Platte Natural Resources Districts indicated that the water level at Lake McConaughy would be lower, but more stable, if groundwater management were adopted. Under current management, the lake level fluctuates wildly, depending upon rains and upstream snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains.

Kent Miller, manager of the Twin Platte NRD, stood behind the study Monday.

"We still think it's feasible," he said. "We think there's potential benefits to recreation and potential benefits to water in the Platte River."

Central is in the process of reviewing other aspects of the proposal, such as its effect on Platte flows. Until those evaluations are done, no final decisions about the concept will be made, said Don Kraus, Central's general manager.

When the NRDs announced the results of the preliminary study in May, it generated buzz as a potential solution to the vexing problem of finding adequate water to meet the needs of irrigation, wildlife and the state's major cities, which rely on the Platte for drinking water.

Switching to groundwater management also has been billed as a way to help Nebraska potentially save money by complying with endangered species regulations. By some estimates, compliance with the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program could cost up to \$500 million.

The proposal will be discussed Nov. 13 at a Lincoln conference hosted by the Nebraska Water Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

With barge season ending, dam releases will be cut by two-thirds

By Nancy Gaarder

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Omaha World-Herald

The Army Corps of Engineers is moving quickly to protect its drought-depleted reservoirs on the Missouri River, now that barge season is coming to an end.

In two weeks, the corps will begin restricting, to a greater extent than normal, its wintertime releases from Gavins Point Dam, the agency announced Tuesday. The corps has been keeping releases high to support barge traffic.

The move to curtail winter releases begins Nov. 21. Barge season ends the next day in the nearest downstream port, Sioux City, Iowa. It ends Nov. 24 in Omaha and Dec. 1 in St. Louis.

Releases from Gavins Point will be restricted to an average of 12,000 cubic feet per second, about 30 percent less than the normal winter rate of 17,000 cfs.

Currently, releases are running at 37,500 cubic feet per second.

For the most part, downstream communities are prepared for the consequences of lower levels.

Joel Christensen, vice president of water operations for the Metropolitan Utilities District, said the 12,000 cfs level would be enough to keep the taps open in Omaha, as long as the corps boosts releases periodically to prevent wintertime freeze-ups.

"We don't expect any problems," Christensen said.

Jody Farhat, who oversees reservoir releases for the corps, said protective wintertime surges will be done as needed.

Kansas City, Mo., water officials told the corps that the restricted wintertime flows may not be high enough for their city's water supplies. Mike Klender, water plant manager for Kansas City, was advised by the corps that the city should consider installing its auxiliary pumps. The St. Joseph, Mo., News-Press wrote in its report on a regional river meeting in that city.

Releases from Gavins Point, the farthest downstream of six large dams on the Missouri River, dictate, to a large extent, river levels from Sioux City to St. Louis.

Rainfall has been below normal in the upper Missouri River for eight months, according to the corps. If current trends continue, the three largest reservoirs, Fort Peck, Garrison and Oahe, are likely to be 10 to 12 feet below their desired levels in March, the corps said.