Agenda Item: 12.

MEMORANDUM

TO THE BOARD:

SUBJECT: General Manager's Report

DATE: November 7, 2011

FROM: John Winkler, General Manager

- A. <u>INFORMATION/EDUCATION REPORT</u>: The I&E Report detailing Information and Education activities for the month of October 2011, is attached for your review.
- B. <u>GENERAL MANAGER UPDATE:</u> The General Manger Update Letter emailed on October 28th, is attached for your review.
- C. <u>HERON HAVEN:</u> Ground breaking ceremony at Heron Haven. November 22, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

D. <u>PERSONNEL/MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS</u>:

- 1. **Ron Lehman**, Operations and Maintenance Superintendent, has informed me that he plans on retiring from his position on November 18, 2011. Ron started with the District in December 1973, working as an Equipment Operator, and was promoted to the position of Operations and Maintenance Superintendent in June of 1979. He will be missed by all. The District is in the process of finding a replacement.
- 2. **Austen Hill** has been hired to replace Heather Guthridge as the Environmental Education Assistant. Austen comes to us from Fontenelle Forest and Nature Association where he served as the Interpretive Outdoor Education/Teacher-Naturalist/Trail Guide/Animal Caretaker. I look forward to working with Austen and wish him luck in his new position.
- E. <u>REPORT ON PURCHASES CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, AND PERSONAL PROPERTY</u>: Pursuant to Board direction, attached is a report indicating construction services, professional services and personal property purchases for the month of October, 2011. Please review this report and contact me if you have any questions.
- F. <u>CURRENT AND ON-GOING PROJECTS P-MRNRD LEGAL COUNSEL</u>: Attached is a copy of the current and on-going projects for District Legal Counsel, Paul Peters, as of October 17, 2011. I would ask each Director to review this listing. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

G. <u>NEBRASKA UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE – FIRST SESSION HEARING</u>
<u>SCHEDULE</u>: The Interim Hearing Schedules of the Nebraska Unicameral are attached.

H. NEWS CLIPS:

- ✓ Summer 2011, UNMC Connect article River research spawns revelations
- ✓ October 14, 2011 Midlands Voices article Water ruling good for all of Nebraska
- ✓ October 25, 2011 Douglas Co. Post-Gazette article NRD Board approves new election subdistricts
- ✓ October 26, 2011 Papillion Times article Thompson Creek demolitions near completion
- ✓ October 26, 2011 Papillion times article La Vista link connects to Keystone Trail
- ✓ October 27, 2011 Citizen article Study pins ag loss at \$28 million for Washington County
- ✓ October 27, 2011 OWH article Plan to buy riverfront homes eyed
- ✓ November 1, 2011 OWH article Free well water tests for flood victims
- ✓ November 2, 2011 Bellevue Leader article NRD may offer to buy riverfront properties

Word/Winkler/GM Reports/2011/november

October, 2011 Information/Education Report

Information

- Assisted with UNMC water testing project. Wrote news releases and placed ads in weekly newspapers
- Continued working on interpretive signs.
- Attended Public Relations conference in Orlando, Florida
- Updated Facebook and web site pages
- Finalized 2011 Public Service campaigns and compiled accomplishments
- Continued work on Spectrum Newsletter
- Promoted Blair office open house
- Assisted with selection of new Education Assistant hiring

Education

- Presentations
 - o Macroinvertebrates to Millard South Environmental Studies Class
 - o Boy Scouts Forester Badge
 - Water Quality to Millard South Environmental Studies Class
 - o Surface Water to Sandoz Elementary Tiger Explorers
 - o GPS to Joslyn Elementary 6th graders
 - o Water Works Festival Planning/Coordination to National Conference of Camp Directors
 - Pollination to Sandoz Cub Explorers
 - o Fishing to Millard South Environmental Studies Class
- Facilitated MORE Nature Meeting
- Met with MPS concerning Outdoor Classroom at Sandoz Elementary
- Education Assistant position—Essay Interviews & Personal Interviews held, Candidate Selected
- Cleaned out, inventoried, and organized Education materials and supplies
- Continued working on Outdoor Classroom Grant revisions
- Continued sending out classroom sets of Water Education books
- Facilitated Durham Museum Soil/Water Conservation Badge workshop
- Attended North American Association of Environmental Educators Conference
- Continued planning year-long nature clubs at 3 area schools
- Started on November e-cultivation

Dear Directors:

Redistricting

Attached are detailed maps of the individual sub districts and the PMNRD as a whole. All the county clerks/election commissioners have been contacted and we will be submitting the boundaries in their preferred formats (GIS or paper). Hard copies will be sent or be available to each director as well.

California Bend

Mr. Jim Becic and Ron Lehman have looked at the California Bend site due assess this summers flood damage and believe it looks OK (e.g. no noticeable problem at old slough area). The Corps of Engineers is responsible to maintain the lower chute part if there are any problems, as per Jim. Jim indicated that the Corps is taking the position to check back in a year to see if the projects are the same as today to confirm that they weathered the flood OK.

W-3

According to Jason Sall, the fence contractor has installed the wood posts and should be done with fencing on Oct. 26. He believes all work should be done this week. The project won't be ready for final payment until Dec, due to the need to check quantities, etc. prior to final payment. The winter wheat cover crop has come up and looks good as per the inspector, so we have vegetation cover on the dam site. The native grass likely hasn't germinated, based on past experience.

Herod Haven

Jim Becic indicated they are dewatering the site. The excavation work won't start until Nov. It appears the notice to proceed date is Nov. 1.

District Whistle Stop Tour

Over the course of the next two to three months I will be making personal visits to mayors, county board chairs, city/village council presidents, city administrators and other stakeholders throughout the District to solicit input on District activities and to ensure open lines of communication between the NRD and our partners.....

Flooding Assessment

The District continues to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine the extent of damage to Disrtrict levees and the process necessary to dispose of sandbags and seepage blankets that were installed during the summer flooding event. In addition, District staff continues to make repairs to the levee system by removing debris and filling rodent holes and other problem areas that have been identified.

Personnel Issues

With the recent retirement of Roh Lehman, longtime O & M supervisor, management is once again in the position of making personnel changes to continue the effecient

operation of the District and to plan for future staffing needs. This is a challenging time for the District and will continue to be so for the next five years as more retirements are on the horizon. If I have said this once I have said this a hundred times the NRD is blessed with an experienced, professional staff that is unparalleled in its knowledge and abilities and now we have the opportunity to continue to build on that strength and to further reduce personnel costs and increase effectiveness and efficency.

I hope everyone has a great weekend and as always if you need anything please feel free to contact me.

Highest Regards,

John Winkler General Manager

Report On Purchases Construction Services, Professional Services, Personal Property

October, 2011

Survey for King Lake Install an Interior and Exterior basement waterproof/drainage
aterproof/c
Remove and replace broken sidewalk @ NRC office



Updated: October 17, 2011

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)
- Big Papio: (Cleveland)
 - **♦** Gabion Repair Project Easements (W)
- West Branch: (Cleveland)
 - o Land Exchange with Sarpy Co. (96th St.) (P)
- Western Sarpy Dike: (Cleveland)
 - o Saunders County side ROW agreement and easements (F)
- Floodway Purchase Program: (Laster)
 - Sarpy County/Bellevue Interlocal for Elbow Bend/Iske Park areas (N)
 - Purchase agreements and closing documents for King Lake Osborne Property(W)
- Trail Projects: (Bowen)
- Missouri River Corridor Project: (Becic)
 - o Interlocal Agreement w/Omaha on Omaha Levee and Floodwall (P)
- USDA PL 566 Projects, Silver Creek and Pigeon/Jones Watershed: (Schumacher/Cleveland)
 - Pigeon/Jones Site 15 Purchase Agreements and closing documents (W)
 - o Papio W-3 Eminent Domain (Camden) (F)
 - Papio W-3 Access-Quiet Title Action (N)

- Papio Watershed Dam Sites: (Grint/Laster/Petermann)
 - o Interlocal agreement with Douglas County for DS 15A (W)
 - o Interlocal agreement with City of Omaha for DS 15A (F)
 - **②** Zorinsky Basin #1 − purchase agreements, deeds and easements (W)
 - o WP-5 Interlocal Agreement with Papillion and Sarpy County (P)
- Papio Creek Watershed Partnership (Stormwater): (Grint)
- Rural Water Projects: (Sklenar)
- Other:
 - o Prepare Interlocal Agreement w/UNO on Heritage Tract for Glacier Creek (Grint) (F)
 - Revised Waterloo Levee Interlocal for Elkhorn River Stabilization (Grint) (N)
 - Revised Sarpy Co. Elkhorn River/240th Street Interlocal for Interim Measures (Bowen) (N)
 - Elkhorn River/240th Street Project easement documents (Bowen) (N)

/pt/peters/project list/2011/October

NEBRASKA UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF INTERIM COMMITTEE HEARINGS November 4, 2011

Friday, November 4, 2011

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee 9:30 a.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR244 (Avery) Interim study to examine issues within the jurisdiction of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

LR224 (Mello) Interim study to examine issues surrounding energy financing contracts, also known as energy savings performance contracts

LR267 (Mello) Interim study to examine issues relating to regulatory flexibility policies

LR230 (Brasch) Interim study to examine issues relating to development and implementation of a biobased product program for government procurement

LR245 (Avery) Interim study to examine how technology may be used in elections to make the process more efficient and user-friendly for voters

LR307 (Schilz) Interim study to examine the process of decreasing the number of county commissioners

Urban Affairs Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR241 (Mello) Interim study to examine issues surrounding the Nebraska Redevelopment Act

2:30 p.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR227 (Hadley) Interim study to examine adopting a comprehensive plumbing code applicable to all jurisdictions that could enforce the comprehensive plumbing code

Monday, November 7, 2011

Education Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR265 (Mello) Interim study to examine the feasibility of implementing a Career Readiness Certificate program

Education Committee and Appropriations Committee

10:30 a.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE
LR206 (Mello) Interim study to examine funding streams available to adult education programs to better transition adults into postsecondary education through bridge programs

Monday, November 14, 2011

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee and Health and Human Services Committee ***Canceled*** 9:00 a.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR85 (Pahls) Interim study to determine how insurance laws should be amended by the Legislature to respond to the provisions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee ***Canceled***

1:30 p.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR219 (Pahls) Interim study to examine insurance severage of services to treat individuals with autism

Friday, November 18, 2011

Agriculture Committee

10:30 a.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR324 (Pirsch) Interim study to examine ways for the State of Nebraska to help facilitate an increase in the export of Nebraska's agricultural products

1:30 p.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LB297 (Carlson) Interim study to review the report of the Dept. of Agriculture pursuant to LB305, identifying authorities and resources necessary to carry out a cooperative program of state meat and poultry inspection

Revenue Committee

10:00 a.m. - Room 1525, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR350 (Revenue Committee) Interim study to examine issues pertaining to the process and procedures used to value and equalize real property

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1525, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR210 (Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee) Interim study to examine the public employees retirement systems administered by the Public Employees Retirement Board

Tuesday, November 29, 2011

Appropriations Committee and Health and Human Services Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR282 (Campbell) Interim study to provide for review, assessment, and recommendations relating to the implementation of the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act

Invited testimony taken first followed by open public testimony.

1:30 p.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR285 (Conrad) Interim study to examine the nursing shortage in Nebraska

Health and Human Services Committee

3:00 p.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR306 (Conrad) Interim study to assess the effectiveness of the ACCESS Nebraska system in building partnerships with community-based organizations and serving clients via the new system

Monday, December 5, 2011

Judiciary Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR288 (Ashford) Interim study to examine issues relating to standing for foster parents in removal proceedings

10:00 a.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

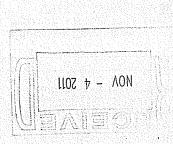
Studying policies and procedures associated with immigrants who come in contact with law enforcement at Federal, state, and local levels.

2:00 p.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR243 (McGill) Interim study to examine the extent of human trafficking in Nebraska in connection with labor and sex trafficking

If auxiliary aids or reasonable accommodations are needed for attendance at a hearing, please call the office of the Clerk of the Legislature at (402) 471-2271, or for persons with hearing and/or speech impairments, please call the Nebraska Relay System at (800) 833-7352 TTY or (800) 833-0920 Voice (24 hours notice is requested). Advance notice of ten business days is needed when requesting an interpreter.

The Interim Hearing Schedule is also available via the Internet at www.nebraskalegislature.gov



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NEBRASKA UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF INTERIM COMMITTEE HEARINGS October 28, 2011

Friday, October 28, 2011

Agriculture Committee

2:30 p.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR278 (Carlson) Interim study to examine the implications of the emerging livestock disease traceability framework governing movements of animals in interstate commerce described in the Animal Disease Traceability Comprehensive Report

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee and Health and Human Services Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

Briefing on insurance exchange program by the Nebraska Dept. of Insurance

Briefing - Open to public, invited testimony only

Business and Labor Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

Examine the status of employee misclassification since the passage of LB563

Revenue Committee

10:00 a.m. - Metro Community College, South Omaha Campus, ITC Building, 2909 Edward Babe Gomez Ave., Omaha, NE

LR234 (Nordquist) Interim study to examine policy options and develop a long-term plan to support infrastructure development for the use of natural gas as a transportation fuel

Revenue Committee and Urban Affairs Committee

10:00 a.m. (Following the hearing on LR234) - Metro Community College, South Omaha Campus, ITC Building, 2909 Edward Babe Gomez Ave., Omaha, NE

LR263 (Mello) Interim study to examine municipal, state, and federal programs available to assist with job creation in the manufacturing sector

Revenue Committee

1:30 p.m. - Metro Community College, South Omaha Campus, ITC Building, 2909 Edward Babe Gomez Ave., Omaha, NE

LÁ232 (Cornett) Interim study to examine the fiscal impact of tax increment financing on taxpayers and governments throughout the state

Wednesday, November 2, 2011

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee and Appropriations Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE **Rescheduled from Monday, November 7, 2011**

Joint Hearing of Transportation & Telecommunications Committee and the Appropriations Committee for Department of Roads Needs Assessment Briefing

Friday, November 4, 2011 continued on next page

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

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Friday, November 4, 2011 continued

Urban Affairs Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

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Monday, November 7, 2011

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Education Committee and Appropriations Committee

10:30 a.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR206 (Mello) Interim study to examine funding streams available to adult education programs to better transition adults into postsecondary education through bridge programs

<u>Transportation and Telecommunications Committee</u> **Canceled**

10:00 a.m. - Room 1525, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR233 (Hadley) Interim study to review the scope of the agricultural exemption from the One Call Notification System Act

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee and Appropriations Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE **Rescheduled for Wednesday, November 2, 2011**

Joint Hearing of Transportation & Telecommunications Committee and the Appropriations Committee for Department of Roads Needs Assessment Briefing

Monday, November 14, 2011

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee and Health and Human Services Committee

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Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee

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Friday, November 18, 2011

Agriculture Committee

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Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee

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NEBRASKA UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF INTERIM COMMITTEE HEARINGS October 21, 2011

Wednesday, October 26, 2011

Urban Affairs Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR209 (Urban Affairs Committee) Interim study to examine all of the building codes in Nebraska

Friday, October 28, 2011

Agriculture Committee **Note time change**

2:30 p.m. 3:00 p.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR278 (Carlson) Interim study to examine the implications of the emerging livestock disease traceability framework governing movements of animals in interstate commerce described in the Animal Disease Traceability Comprehensive Report

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Examine the status of employee misclassification since the passage of LB563

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10:00 a.m. - Metro Community College, South Omaha Campus, ITC Building, 2909 Edward Babe Gomez Ave.,

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Revenue Committee

1:30 p.m. - Metro Community College, South Omaha Campus, ITC Building, 2909 Edward Babe Gomez Ave.,

LR232 (Cornett) Interim study to examine the fiscal impact of tax increment financing on taxpayers and governments throughout the state

Friday, November 4, 2011

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

9:30 a.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR244 (Avery) Interim study to examine issues within the jurisdiction of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

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Monday, November 7, 2011 continued on next page

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03-22-03 Lincoln, NE 68509-4604 PO Box 94604 Clencara Legislature State Capitol

NEBRASKA UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF INTERIM COMMITTEE HEARINGS October 14, 2011

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Health and Human Services Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR37 (Health and Human Services Committee) Provide the Health and Human Services Committee be designated to review, investigate, and assess the effect of the child welfare reform initiative implemented by the Dept. of Health and Human Services

Open to public, invited testimony only

Wednesday, October 26, 2011

Urban Affairs Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

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1:30 p.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR241 (Mello) Interim study to examine issues surrounding the Nebraska Redevelopment Act

2:30 p.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR227 (Hadley) Interim study to examine adopting a comprehensive plumbing code applicable to all jurisdictions that could enforce the comprehensive plumbing code

Monday, November 7, 2011

Education Committee *** Note room change ***

9:00 a.m. - Room 1525 Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR265 (Mello) Interim study to examine the feasibility of implementing a Career Readiness Certificate

Education Committee and Appropriations Committee ***Note room change***

10:30 a.m. - Reem 1525 Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE
LR206 (Mello) Interim study to examine funding streams available to adult education programs to better transition adults into postsecondary education through bridge programs

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

10:00 a.m. - Room 1525, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE LR233 (Hadley) Interim study to review the scope of the agricultural exemption from the One-Call Notification System Act

<u>Transportation and Telecommunications Committee and Appropriations Committee</u>
1:30 p.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

Joint Hearing of Transportation & Telecommunications Committee and the Appropriations Committee for Department of Roads Needs Assessment Briefing

Monday, November 14, 2011

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee and Health and Human Services Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR85 (Pahls) Interim study to determine how insurance laws should be amended by the Legislature to respond to the provisions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee
1:30 p.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR219 (Pahls) Interim study to examine insurance coverage of services to treat individuals with autism

Friday, November 18, 2011

Agriculture Committee

10:30 a.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE LR324 (*Pirsch*) Interim study to examine ways for the State of Nebraska to help facilitate an increase in

the export of Nebraska's agricultural products

1:30 p.m. - Room 1524, State Čapitol, Lincoln, NE LB297 (Carlson) Interim study to review the report of the Dept. of Agriculture pursuant to LB305, ties and resources necessary to carry out a cooperative prog reat and ide-" pou

If auxiliary aids or reasonable accommodations are needed for attendance at a hearing, please call the office of the Clerk of the Legislature at (402) 471-2271, or for persons with hearing and/or speech impairments, please call the Nebraska Relay System at (800) 833-7352 TTY or (800) 833-0920 Voice (24 hours notice is requested). Advance notice of ten business days is needed when requesting an interpreter.

The Interim Hearing Schedule is also available via the Internet at www.nebraskalegislature.gov

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03-22-03 Lincoln, NE 68509-4604 PO-Box 94604 State Capitol Clerk of the Legislature



River research spawns revelations

by Elizabeth Kumru

ish in the Elkhorn River are confused about their sex.

Females are becoming defeminized and males are becoming more female.

What is it about this Nebraska river that's causing the fish to undergo a sex change every spring and summer? That's what Alan Kolok, Ph.D., wants to know.

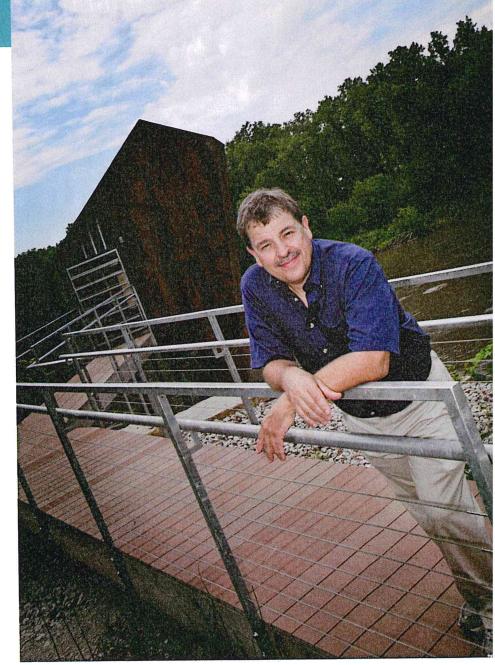
A physiological ecologist and aquatic toxicologist, his research is focused on fish living in contaminated environments and the impact of agrichemical contaminants on fish.

"Like the canary in the coal mine, fish are the sentinels for our drinking water," Dr. Kolok said. "What happens to the fish is a cause of concern."

Dr. Kolok is director of the Aquatic
Toxicology Laboratory at the University of
Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and interim
director of the Center for Environmental
Health and Toxicology in UNMC's College of
Public Health.

He is interested in biologically active compounds in water and their unusual methods of being toxic to wildlife and humans. Rather than being directly toxic, these compounds hijack cell signaling pathways and lead to irreversible changes at astonishingly low exposure, he said.

"Low levels can have a big effect," said Dr. Kolok, whose research is funded by a National Science Foundation grant. "It's not causing cancer, but it's masquerading as an internal hormone."



Alan Kolok, Ph.D.

"Animals from the wild are different because a number of factors in the environment can affect them."

Alan Kolok, Ph.D.



For the past 10 years, he has evaluated the effects of the herbicide atrazine on aquatic life along the Elkhorn River, which flows 290 miles from the eastern Sandhills to join the Platte River just southwest of Omaha. Atrazine is a herbicide commonly used on corn; its environmental and public health impacts are controversial.

Atrazine is one of the three most commonly applied herbicides in the United States with more than 75 million pounds used annually across the country. Nebraska farmers apply considerable amounts of the herbicide each year to their fields. Although this chemical can increase crop yields, large amounts often escape through rainwater runoff and enter the waterways, Dr. Kolok said.

"It's surprising how little we know about where atrazine goes and what it does over a long period of time," Dr. Kolok said. "I'd like to know if the fish are breeding during this annual surge.

"If the water is leading to changes in cell signaling in fish, it could lead to reproductive dysfunction in humans," he said.

With its many tributaries, the Elkhorn watershed encompasses an area of about 7,000 miles.

To perform a large-scale inventory of atrazine in the basin, Dr. Kolok tapped his natural inventive talent and came up with a clever solution. A precise measure of the water costs \$100, but he found a kit, similar

to a pregnancy test, which only costs \$10 and records if atrazine is present above the Environmental Protection Agency's minimum level allowed for safe drinking water — three parts per billion.

Then he enlisted the help of "citizen scientists" — people interested in the environment such as Boy Scouts, high school students and members of the Audubon Society and Sierra Club.

They took samples at 150 different sites along the river on April 23 and 120 sites on May 21. The results were dramatic.

Once in the water, atrazine is taken up by aquatic life and can have a negative effect on reproductive organs. This phenomenon is commonly known as endocrine disruption.

In April, atrazine was detected in only two sites, both close to Omaha, but in May, atrazine lit up the map south of Norfolk.

"Norfolk became the dividing line," he said. "Everything northwest of the city, where cattle graze and fields are full of wheat and sorghum, the water had no atrazine. But, south of town, where corn and soybean fields begin, we registered mostly positive."

Contamination of the water is widespread.

In 2002, the U.S. Geological Society sampled hundreds of surface water sites around the country and found that 80 percent of them had trace contaminates — steroids, pharmaceuticals and personal care

products. The Washington Post reported that an algae bloom created a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico and the female fish in the area became less feminine

For his river project, Dr. Kolok breeds fathead minnows in his lab at UNO so he can record the gene expression of the fish from birth. "Animals from the wild are different because a number of factors in the environment can affect them," he said.

The fish are then exposed to the Elkhorn River for seven days — long enough to affect gene expression. Dr. Kolok invented a 40-pound mobile unit that can expose up to 20 fish to a continuous flow of river water.

Soon, his Elkhorn River Research Station (ERRS), an environmental research/education facility, will provide a secure, controlled environment in which students and faculty can conduct experiments. Nine holding tanks will be available at the ERRS to hold fish and other aquatic animals for experimentation. Water from the river will be continuously pumped through the tanks so that animals in the ERRS will be exposed to river water in real time.

"Next year, we'll continuously expose fish from April through the summer over 10-day periods.

We'll be able to do a number of different studies, chemical and biological sampling in real time, over the growing season," Dr. Kolok said.

"I want to know what's in our water," he said. 🚱





ON THE COVER: Aquatic toxicologist Alan Kolok, Ph.D., has found surprising results while

testing Nebraska's river waters.

RIVER RESEARCH SPAWNS REVELATIONS

Public health researchers study why fish in the Elkhorn River are confused about their sex.

LATINO TEENS HAVE HEALTHIER SUMMER W

A public health research study demonstrates how youth advocacy and social marketing can shift the overall climate of childhood obesity in the Latino community.

MAURER CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH OPENS W

Public health at UNMC moved into its new home in May.

"Today, we have done a good thing for people," said UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D.

BACK TO PREVENTION -THE PUSH FOR PRIMARY CARE

UNMC's nationally recognized primary care program steps forward to create a Primary Care Center.

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College of Nursing Interdisciplinary UNMC

Published Friday, October 14, 2011

Midlands Voices: Water ruling good for all of Nebraska

By Jasper Fanning
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The writer, who has a Ph.D. in agricultural economics, is manager of the Upper Republican NRD, based in Imperial, Neb.

Nebraska has quietly become a national leader in agricultural water management — natural resources districts and the state work together to regulate, monitor and plan water use in ways that are only talked about in other states. A recent decision by the Nebraska Supreme Court has solidified this leadership structure and will produce important initiatives that benefit Nebraskans from Benkelman to Blair.

The ruling last month upheld the occupation tax on irrigation authorized by the Legislature and Gov. Dave Heineman in 2007, and that was modified in 2010 to allow the tax to be levied by more NRDs. Currently it is paid by irrigators in the Republican River basin, including the Upper Republican NRD that I manage in Perkins, Chase and Dundy Counties.

The intent of the occupation tax is to generate revenue for projects that increase stream flow. Creating additional stream flow is of particular importance in the Republican basin because it is Nebraska's source of an interstate compact between Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado.

But why should a resident of, say, Millard who has no personal or economic interest in the region care about generating additional stream flow using the tax upheld by the state Supreme Court?

Simply put, if irrigators weren't paying the tax, that resident and other taxpayers across the state could be asked to shoulder more of the financial burden of maintaining compliance. And if neither irrigators nor taxpayers at large were required to pay for compliance measures, some of the long-term financial consequences of noncompliance would be felt across the state.

In a broader sense, maintaining compliance using the occupation tax will protect one of the most productive agricultural regions in Nebraska from economically destructive, and unnecessary, regulations that could be imposed.

This is in the entire state's best interests — while much is made of the rural population flight to urban areas, high ag land and commodity prices have prevented a commensurate rural-to-urban shift in the economic base of the state. Urban residents rely on rural folks, and vice versa.

Paying for projects that generate stream flow is partially designed to prevent severe and potentially economically crippling regulations, but isn't meant to avoid regulations and other management actions altogether. Surface water and groundwater users are now working cooperatively on conjunctive management plans with the state that have exciting potential to more smartly and efficiently move and utilize available water in the basin for the benefit of both sets of users, while aiding compliance with the compact.

As for reductions in water use, a water-management plan approved by my district and the state has a goal of reducing groundwater pumping by 20 percent from 1998-2002 levels. The district has a strong track record of limiting water use: The steepest groundwater declines in my district are less than half the sharpest declines experienced in states like Kansas and Texas, thanks to water-use restrictions that began 30 years ago in the Upper Republican NRD. It was the first NRD in the state and probably the first government entity in the country to regulate agricultural water use.

The occupation tax will allow this progressive tradition to continue. Farmers and ag-land owners have been paying \$6 per irrigated acre in the Upper Republican NRD and next year will pay \$10 an acre. That rate will produce about \$4.5 million in a three-county region with fewer than 9,000 people. Where's the money going?

This year, \$1.9 million in occupation tax funds and \$1.2 million in federal funds will permanently retire nearly 1,400 acres near the Republican and its tributaries. The retirement is expected over the long term to increase stream flow by an average of 1,000 acre-feet annually. The occupation tax will fund more retirement in the future.

My district also has purchased 3,260 irrigated acres for \$10 million that will be permanently retired from irrigation. A portion of the water that otherwise would have been used to irrigate crops will be piped into the Republican River system to aid compact compliance.

Water management in Nebraska will continue to become more complex, but with the occupation tax, the unique regulatory authority NRDs have and cooperation between surface-water and groundwater users, we can meet our challenges for the benefit of the entire state.

DOUGLAS CO. POST-GAZETTE

ELKHORN, Nebraska

Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2011

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Circulation: 2599 Clip Size: 80.96 sq. inches

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NRD Board approves new election subdistricts

Papio-Missouri River NRD John Winkler. approved new election subdistricts on October 13 at their regular monthly meeting. The Board reviewed four alternative election subdistrict maps, created by the largest subdistrict be within five Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, that reflected the 2010

'The purpose of this redistricting is to show equal representation in all subdistricts, striving to keep within the One Person, One Vote

The Board of Directors of the Rule," said NRD General Manager 11 election subdistricts. Each

The standard for local governments requires that the population of the smallest subdistrict and the population of the percent of each other.

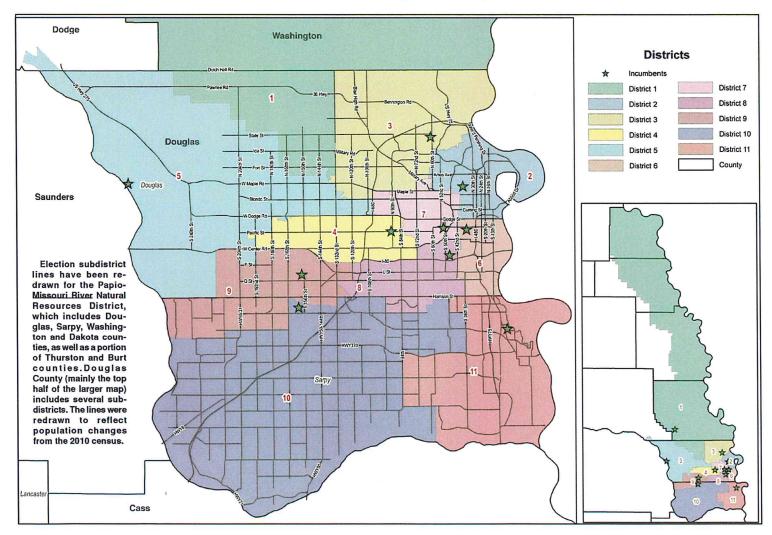
The NRD area includes all of Sarpy, Douglas, Washington and Dakota Counties, plus the eastern 60 percent of Thurston and Burt Counties. This area is divided into

district numbers approximately 66,000 residents.

NRD Board members are chosen by voters through primary and general elections. The new subdistrict boundaries will be used for 2012 primary and general elections.

The MAPA-recommended subdistrict goals are: (1) one person - one vote; (2) to make subdistricts as compact and contiguous as possible, (3) to keep incumbent directors in their current districts and; (4) to follow election precinct lines.

The District is required to certify new boundaries and submit them to the Douglas and County Election Commissions on or before Friday, November 25.



PAPILLION, Nebraska

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Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2011

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sq. inches

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Page/Section: A 12



Thompson Creek demolitions near completion

By John Schreier

Times/Sun Editor

The north bank of Thompson Creek is a lonely place, with just one vacant house remaining on the south side of Park View Boulevard.

Five years after La Vista began studying the erosion problem along the creek, the demolition of 24 houses along Park View Boulevard and Valley Road is nearly complete.

The first phase of the project included the acquisition of the homes - all voluntarily sold to the city - between 72nd Street and Edgewood Boulevard. The final house should be taken down very shortly.

Erosion along the creek bed was seriously damaging properties and utilities before the acquisition started, community relations director Mitch Beaumont said. Next to be swallowed by the creek would have been the homes themselves.

"Some homeowners were losing multiple feet of their backyards, and outbuildings and utility lines were falling into the creek," he said.

A Federal Emergency Management Agency grant of more than \$2 million covered about 75 percent of the acquisitions, and the city and Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District each chipped in about \$340,000 to cover the remaining cost — a figure Beaumont said the city didn't cross in purchasing the homes.

Once the homes are gone, the city and NRD will begin the process of stabilizing the creek's banks and channel from 72nd Street to La Vista Falls Golf Course. The work may also relocate the creek's

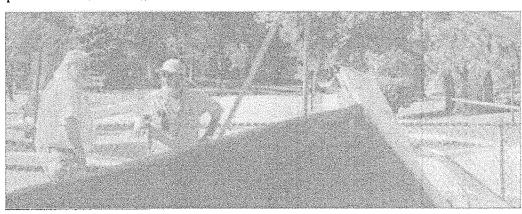
houses to avoid future erosion mits may take years, and city problems.

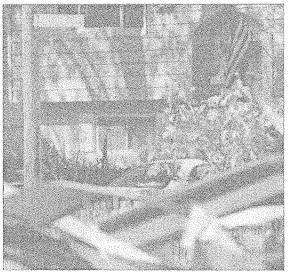
"We're trying to be proactive in taking care of older neighborhoods," La Vista Mayor Doug Kindig said. "Something needed to be done to ensure the longevity of the area."

Beaumont said early estimates place the cost of that project around \$2 million, which would begin once necessary funding and environmental permits were acquired.

The timetable for the next phase of work, however, re-

channel away from existing mains unclear. Obtaining perofficials are still applying for





Photos by John Schreler

Above, Don Gore, left, and John Hammond survey the remains of a house Hammond demolished on Park View Boulevard along Thompson Creek. At left, homes on the north side of Park View Boulevard, such as this one at the corner of 75th Street. sit intact while those across the street were demolished during the first stage of work to stabilize Thompson Creek between 72nd Street and La Vista Falls Golf Course. A total of 24 houses have been demolished in 2011, and the lone remaining house is slated to come down very soon.

TIMES

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2681

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Page/Section: A 12



La Vista link connects to Keystone Trail

By John Schreier

Times/Sun Editor

La Vista has waited more than 10 years for its link to the metro area's trail system, and the first part of the project has nearly arrived.

The long-awaited Keystone Trail connection has finally reached into the city. Pavement from the La Vista Sports Complex on 66th Street has nearly reached Harrison Street, where an existing path stretches over the Big Papio Creek and onto one of Omaha's most heavily trafficked trails.

The pedestrian and bike path - scheduled to be completed this year - will cross 66th Street and be accessible from the neighborhood near 69th Street and James Avenue. Trail users essentially will have a trailhead complete with a lit, paved parking lot at the sports complex.

"It's a huge bonus for the city to have a portion completed and have a safe path for biLa Vista's recreation director, a cyclist himself.

Derek Wilson, a local avid cyclist, said he'd always wondered why there was no connection between the Harrison Street path and the sports com-

And given the trail's access via the neighborhood or the sports complex, he predicts it will be a popular path.

"It opens up that neighborhood to other neighborhoods and communities nearby, Wilson said. "It makes it easier for families to go for a walk or a bike ride."

With the trail's new spur, said La Vista spokesman Mitch Beaumont, comes a world of opportunities for local hikers and bikers.

Beaumont called the progress "a vital element" to the city's plan to create a continuous trail starting at the Sports Complex that would run parallel to Park View Boulevard through proposed park land

cyclists and pedestrians to get stretching at least to the city to the trail," said Scott Stopak, pool at 85th Street and Birch Drive - and possibly farther west.

> "The La Vista link provides a connection for residents to gain access to the regional trail network through the Keystone Trail and its linkage to other trails in the metro area," he

Further plans to expand the local trail network at the West Papio Trail, which would cut through western La Vista near the Giles Road and Harrison Street interchange with Interstate 80, are still in the planning stages.



Photo by John Schreier

The concrete for the initial stretch of La Vista's long-awaited link to the Keystone Trail has been poured. This photo shows the trail's path along 66th Street, looking south from the La Vista Sports Complex.

CITIZEN

ARLINGTON, Nebraska

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Study pins ag loss at \$28 million for Washington County

The Missouri River flood of 2011 cost Washington County more than \$28.3 million in lost agricultural crop sales and related economic activity, according to a study released this week by the Nebraska Farm Bureau.

The study concluded that the 14 Nebraska counties along the Missouri that were affected by flooding collectively lost nearly \$189 million in crop sales and related economic activity, the Farm Bureau said.

The study also indicated that the difference in 2011 net farm income in Washington County because of the flooding would be \$7.1 million. That figure accounts for production losses and offsetting crop insurance indemnities and disaster payments. The difference in net farm income

in the 14 counties studied was estimated at \$41.1 million for 2011.

Washington County's losses were the second highest along the Missouri, just behind Burt County, which has a total agricultural loss of nearly \$28.7 million.

"We knew the economic losses to farmers and the state were high, but we wanted to quantify them for future policy discussions," Nebraska Farm Bureau President Keith Olsen said.

The study looked at 14 counties along the Missouri River which border South Dakota or Iowa, said Jay Rempe, an agricultural economist and vice president/governmental relations for Nebraska Farm Bureau.

The study looked only at lost crops and doesn't

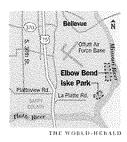
include such costs as disaster clean-up, reduced soil productivity, repairs to levees and impacts on buildings, roads and other property, Farm Bureau President Olsen noted.

"\$189 million is the impact for Nebraska for 2011, but the farmers who were affected will be dealing with the effects of the flood and lower crop yields for years to come. And that will mean less economic activity in eastern Nebraska for several years to come."

The study was conducted by Decision Innovation Solutions of Urbandale, Iowa, which also studied the economic impacts of the flooding on Iowa, on behalf of the Iowa Farm Bureau. The flood's impact on six Iowa southwestern counties was pegged at \$207 million.



The Nebraska Farm Bureau says Washington County lost about \$28.3 million in ag crop sales and related economic activity in this year's Missouri River flooding.



Published Thursday October 27, 2011

Plan to buy riverfront homes eyed

By Kevin Cole WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

A plan to buy out Sarpy County homes damaged by Missouri River flooding this summer hit a few snags this week when it was floated past the County Board.

Marlin Petermann of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District outlined for Sarpy County Board members on Tuesday the \$3 million purchase program that his board has approved. The buyout offers would be extended to an estimated 15 homes in Elbow Lake and 30 residences in Iske Park.

"In terms of repetitive loss due to flooding, Sarpy County has the highest rate in the state," Petermann said. "We could reduce our federal and state tax burden as far as providing flood assistance by removing those structures and returning these areas to a natural state."

FEMA would be asked to pay 75 percent of the cost, with the NRD, Bellevue and Sarpy County completing the buyout by contributing about \$250,000 apiece. Sarpy County partnered with the NRD and the federal government on a \$5.1 million buyout plan following a 1993 flood.

That buyout resulted in all 74 owners in the Holub's Place area and 27 in Elbow Bend selling their properties, Petermann said. Holub's Place sits between Elbow Bend and Iske Park.

The three areas form a five-mile stretch of the riverfront from just south of Offutt Air Force Base to La Platte Road.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency has a Jan. 11 deadline to submit an application for the FEMA funds. The plan is on the agenda for the Bellevue City Council meeting on Nov. 14, and Sarpy County officials have decided to wait for Bellevue's decision before taking any action.

County officials asked a number of questions about the plan Tuesday, including why the homes would be bought at pre-flood valuations and what the benefits are of acquiring the properties.

Sarpy County Administrator Mark Wayne noted that current regulations will prevent many of the homeowners from rebuilding in a flood plain.

"A majority of those properties can't be repaired or rebuilt because of zoning laws, so they're unlivable," Wayne said. Petermann said later that the properties must be bought at pre-flood prices as a requirement of obtaining federal money.

Buying up the properties, Petermann said, would make economic sense because it would relieve the state and federal government of assistance in the future. In addition, he said, the purchase would lessen the workload of emergency personnel who now must provide disaster relief in potentially dangerous conditions.

"We would also be providing assistance and service to those residents of the city and county who have suffered a great deal," he said.

Petermann said that buying the properties should be done now. "In the end," he said, "the only way to control the land is to own the land."

Contact the writer: 402-444-1272, kevin.cole@owh.com

Omaha W-H 11.1.11

Free well water tests for flood victims

LINCOLN — The University of Nebraska Medical Center is offering free domestic well water tests to homeowners and renters in six Nebraska counties.

Graduate students from the College of Public Health will test the water in the Dakota, Douglas, Washington, Thurston, Burt and Sarpy Counties that may have been contaminated by Missouri River flooding.

The tests will evaluate potential bacterial and chemical contamination. They're taking place in conjunction with the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District.

Landowners should schedule an appointment by Nov. 18. The contacts for appointments are Sonya Carlson with the Papio-Missouri River NRD at 402-444-6222 and Erica Colbert with the College of Public Health at 402-552-7261. — AP



This residence in Elbow Bend has a notice from the City of Bellevue warning the resident that the structure is not safe. A meeting for property owners will be held Monday at the Bellevue Fire Training Facility, 3100 SP Benson Drive (31st Street and Cornhusker Road), at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the possible buyout program and answer other questions.

NRD may offer to buy riverfront properties

By Eugene Curtin Leader Staff Writer

For the first time since 1993, Sarpy County agencies might try to remove homeowners in the two remaining riverfront communities south of Bellevue.

The Missouri River communities of Elbow Bend and Iske Place, which consist of approximately 45 homes, will be the object of renewed buyout offers if the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, Sarpy County and the City of Bellevue agree to ask the Federal Emergency Management Agency for \$2.5 million in buyout funds.

The last buyout attempt, which took place after the flood of 1993, cost just over \$5 million and succeeded in closing down the community of Holub's Place when residents agreed to sell all 74 properties to the Papio NRD.

Only 27 of 44 properties were sold in Elbow Bend, however, while owners of the 45 residences in Iske Place all refused to sell.

That 1993 refusal spurred questions among county commissioners at the Oct. 25 County Board meeting, one of whom wondered why the riverfront residents should be bought out at all given their refusal to accept the earlier offer and their decision to risk the high likelihood of future flooding.

Board Chairman Tom Richards said the remaining residents could have sold, as did many others.

"Help me get over that," he told Marlin Petermann, assistant general manager of the NRD, who brought the buyout proposal to the County Board.

"We all like a second chance," Petermann said. "I think lessons have been learned since 1993 that struggling there is not fruitful.

"The bottom line from a state and local perspective is that not having recurring loss-damage structures in the floodway is the goal, and whether it's the first time or the second time or the 10th time, the goal is to get them out of there."

Petermann said the American taxpayer has an interest in freeing the nation's floodways of homes since those homes are protected by expensive government-sponsored flood insurance and are recipients of FEMA aid in times of disaster. Residents also place stress on emergency response teams and law enforcement during times of flood, he said.

Petermann said the residents of Elbow Bend and Iske Place cause Sarpy County to have the highest rate of aid to floodway communities across the state.

FEMA money is available again for floodway buyouts and the NRD is interested in completing what it began in 1993, Petermann said.

He said the NRD plans to ask FEMA for \$2.5 million — half of what FEMA provided for the 1993 buyout.

But he said the NRD board of directors will not apply if it does not have the support of the County Board and the Bellevue City Council, both of which will be expected to help fund 25 percent of the cost of the entire project, which will include demolition, removal and restoring the land to its natural state.

Petermann told the board he believes the Bellevue City Council will consider joining the buyout at its Nov. 14 meeting, and that the process needs to move quickly because an application for FEMA funding must be filed with the state by early December.

County Administrator Mark Wayne said that Bellevue was not involved with the 1993 buyout because the riverfront communities lay outside the city's zoning jurisdiction. They are now inside Bellevue's jurisdiction, he said, and the city will be asked to join the effort.

Wayne said Bellevue officials have already inspected the post-flood structures and ruled that most of them are unlivable, may not be occupied and may not be rebuilt.

Richards asked why a buyout was necessary if the homes could no longer be occupied.

"Good question," Petermann said.

"I think (we are) providing assistance to these people who have been damaged, providing some assistance to help them get their feet on the ground, especially those for whom that's their only home."

He said purchasing the homes, and the land, had a more practical reason.

The NRD will own the property once it is purchased and will control its use, he said. Without that authority, the chance always exists that something else will be built in the area.

"The only way you know you can control it and keep things out is to own it," he said.

Petermann stressed that the buyout is voluntary, and that no riverfront resident will be forced to sell.

"There's no force to this issue," he said. "It's voluntary. They are the property owners. They decide what they want to do with their property. Not the county. Not the city. Not the NRD.

"They hold that sacred right of owning property, and so it's their decision."