

# **Papio Missouri River Natural Resources District**

## **Operations Plan**

**Fiscal Year 2007/2008**

### **Mission Statement**

*Papio Missouri River NRD is to wisely conserve, manage and enhance our soil, water, wildlife and forest resources for the good of all people residing within the Districts Boundaries.*

## **General Administration**

Management believes that the best way to meet the organization's goals and objectives is to have the ability to allocate more resources to actual programs and projects. Consequently, the 2007/2008 fiscal year's budget calls for a decrease in the general administration allocation of over two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) from last fiscal year.

The District has a responsibility to effectively and efficiently utilize taxpayer resources. This fiscal year the District is reducing its property tax levy by utilizing surplus revenue before any new property tax funds are requested. Although total operating budget is projected to increase by eight million dollars the actual property tax requirement will decrease by roughly three hundred thousand dollars. A property valued at one hundred thousand dollars will see a reduction in their property tax rate of nearly four dollars from last fiscal year. This fiscal year the District will continue to explore avenues to reduce costs and to become more streamlined and efficient. The District will explore strategies to reduce costs associated with employee health care, workers compensation, equipment operational expenses, overtime pay and general liability insurance premiums.

This fiscal year the District will further enhance its cooperation and coordination with the myriad of political subdivisions and other agencies within the District. The District will aggressively pursue strategic partnerships with private, local, state and federal bodies in order to secure scarce resources and expertise to implement the programs and projects contained in this Operational Plan. District personnel will spend considerably more time attending official meetings of the various public entities it works with. In addition, the District will increase cooperation with officials and staff of these same public entities in order to share resources, expertise and information. One of the major goals of the District is to organize and conduct a joint public meeting of all the elected officials that represent the 11 entities of the Papio Creek Watershed Partnership. The purpose of this meeting is to assist in the formulation of a comprehensive broad based plan to flood control, water quality, conservation, recreation and wildlife.

It is planned that the District will once again seek General Obligation Bonding Authority from the Nebraska Legislature. The District will participate in two Interim Studies LR 94 (Papio Creek Watershed) and LR 113 (Storm water Management) this fiscal year. A major goal of the District this fiscal year is to work with the NARD, District Legislative Representative and the Natural Resources Commission in seeking approval from Legislature's Appropriations Committee to increase funding for the Natural Resource Development Fund. The District will continue to seek Federal funding for its programs and projects, specifically, Western Sarpy Clear Creek in which the District is seeking six to eight million dollars in the F.Y. 2008 Federal Budget. The District will continue to be an active member in the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance and will pursue congressional and presidential passage of the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA). In this fiscal year the District will solicit competitive proposals for the provision of legislative liaison services.

This fiscal year the District will address the two reportable conditions that were identified in last fiscal years audit. The District will have completed a Capital Asset Inventory per new accounting rules and regulations. In addition, the District will implement strategies to eliminate the "Segregation of Duties" issue that was addressed in the last audit report. The District will continue to work closely with our financial institution partners to assure that all financial transactions are processed according to generally accepted standards.

The District will also continue to work closely with our federal, state and local conservation partners. During this fiscal year it is planned to purchase additional property and prepare preliminary plans for a new Service Center building in Blair to more adequately accommodate our Washington County partners that serve those constituents.

In addition, this fiscal year the District will conduct a Strategic Planning Process with the General Manager, key District staff and the District's Board of Directors. The purpose of this process is to jointly plan the District's future course of action with regards to why, when and how to meet the critical missions of the Papio Missouri River NRD.

To help maintain a professional staff to implement the ever growing programs and projects of the District, one project manager will be added this fiscal year. The District will also continue to maintain a quality inventory of equipment and vehicles, with necessary replacements, to increase efficiency and adequately carry out these programs and projects.

It is the overriding goal of the Papio Missouri River NRD to be the leading Natural Resource District in the State of Nebraska. To realize that goal it is the intent of District personnel to continue a tradition of unmatched professionalism and integrity

## **Information and Education Programs**

### Publications

Most publications funded through 4211 are continuations of activities carried out over the years. Examples of ongoing district publications include the SPECTRUM newsletter, publication of the NRD's Annual Report in the Omaha W-H Newspaper, brochures related to district projects such as Metro Trails, Environmental Education, Chalco Hills, Back to the River, etc. Also included in 4211 is funding for improvements in the district web Site. Funding is also included for print materials determined to be advantageous to respond to needs determined during the course of FY 2008. It is projected ongoing publications will be completed this fiscal year.

### Special Events

Funding is available through 4215 for the district to participate in the Omaha Boat Sports and Travel Show, and the Fall Home and Garden Show held each year at the Qwest Center. The district has participated in these major shows for many years and currently shares booth space with our Environmental Education partner - Wildlife Encounters. The NRD is also a major partner in the "World O! Water Festival at Chalco Hills. Other "Trade Show" opportunities may arise during FY 2008. Funding may also be required for other special events/public meetings in support of district programs and projects.

### Informational Programs and Materials

Numerous ongoing information activities are funding through 4217 including media relations (clipping service), Radio, TV, Web or other media campaigns utilizing the purchase of ad space to promote district programs, projects and other natural resources issues. In FY 2008, a campaign to support the NRDs involvement in Flood Control/Water Quality issues may be carried out. Other public involvement activities funded thru 4217 include a Public Opinion Survey, giveaways such as tree seedlings and wildflower packets, Updates to NRD Audio/Visual programs and other activities as determined necessary.

A major goal of the District this fiscal year is to increase the public's awareness of District program, projects and activities through the preparation of a greater number of press releases to the media for their dissemination to the public.

### Educational Programs/Materials

The NRD has an ongoing, active Environmental Education effort to reach students and teachers with a natural resources management message. Small grant programs are also carried out for Outdoor Classrooms and Teacher Scholarships for Summer School courses related to environmental education concepts. Ongoing environmental education events such as Earth Day and Water Works are partially funded through this budget item and will be carried out again this fiscal year.

## **Non-Structural Flood Control Projects**

### **Emergency Flood Warning System**

This system was developed to assist emergency management agencies and the National Weather Service in providing the general public with advance warning prior to potential flood events, to provide hydrologic and hydraulic data for future use, and to provide assistance to District personnel during periods of flooding.

In 1995, the Corps of Engineers installed an automated flood warning system in the Papillion Creek Watershed in conjunction with the Big Papio Channel Project. The District is responsible for ongoing operation and maintenance of the 22 gauging stations (rainfall and/or stream) in the system. The U.S. Geological Survey also provides maintenance for nine crest-stage gauges they installed at several of the flood warning sites in 2005. Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington County Emergency Management Agencies provide funding to help offset maintenance costs. The District will continue the maintenance of this critical early warning system.

### **Ice Jam Removal Program**

This program is operational each winter and spring as ice melts on the Platte and Elkhorn Rivers creating the possibility of ice jams. The District executed an agreement with the Lower Platte South NRD, Lower Platte North NRD, and Saunders, Sarpy, Cass, and Douglas Counties that allows for the removal of ice jams by any appropriate means, including explosives. The cost of the program is shared between the sponsoring agencies and a minimum balance of \$100,000 is maintained in the fund. In addition, the sponsoring agencies cooperate with NEMA and the National Weather Service to monitor ice conditions on the Lower Platte and Elkhorn Rivers. In F.Y. 08 a long term contract will be negotiated and executed this fiscal year to provide explosive services to the District in the event this option is needed.

### **Floodway Purchase Program**

This program was established in 1993 and is designed to reduce flood damages through purchase of land and improvements in the designated floodway. It is intended to help remove obstructions in the floodway that were in place prior to the adoption of the federal flood insurance program. Anticipated purchases in F.Y. 08 include properties along Cole Creek in conjunction with the City of Omaha, properties in King Lake along the Elkhorn River and various other willing selling properties in Douglas and Sarpy Counties within the floodways of the Papillion Creeks or Missouri, Platte or Elkhorn Rivers. Hazard Mitigation Funds through the State of Nebraska (NEMA) will offset some of the costs of these purchases.

Within the next five years, the District will work with Douglas County to develop a flood mitigation plan in the King Lake area along the Elkhorn River. The District will once

again apply this fiscal year for Federal funding to implement a flood mitigation/purchase program in the King Lake area. In addition, the District will make an initial purchase of property in the King Lake area utilizing existing funds.

#### Flood Mitigation and Mapping Program

This program provides cost share dollars to communities for flood mitigation and floodplain mapping work. In 2005 the District became a Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) with FEMA to do floodplain mapping work. During F.Y. 2008 the District anticipates spending over \$600,000 on scoping and addressing floodplain mapping needs in Douglas, Sarpy, Washington and Dakota Counties. Most of these dollars will be reimbursed by FEMA through the CTP program.

## **Structural Flood Control Programs and Projects**

### **West Branch Flood Control Project**

The West Branch account is used for funding the construction of the West Branch Channel Project in the reach of 86<sup>th</sup> Street to Giles Road. This project was started in FY2005 and is expected to be completed in FY2008-2009. District staff/equipment is completing the majority of the project. The major goals and budget items for FY2008 are for payments to low water crossings (7 locations) design consultant and contractor. In addition, District will be purchasing pipe materials, crushed rock and riprap for project construction that is being done in-house.

### **Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Flood Control Project**

This project is a multiple year 50 year level flood reduction (e.g. levee improvements) construction project located along both banks of the Platte River upstream of Highway 6, near Ashland, NE. The Papio Missouri River NRD is cooperating with the Lower Platte North NRD, Lower Platte South NRD, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Sarpy County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build this \$21,664,000 project. Local sponsors (NRD's, DNR) have spent \$4,800,000 to date. The Corps of Engineers has appropriated \$7,000,000 through FY2007. Fiscal year 2008 budget reflects the NRD's completing right-of-way acquisition and additional construction cost share with the Corps. The P-MRNRD expense is 5% of total project expenses. This project protects vital public infrastructure including the MUD and City of Lincoln well fields. The District will continue to work with Congressional representatives and the Districts Washington Lobbyist to secure additional federal funds to complete the project. Initial reports have indicated that six million dollars in federal funds may be allocated in the 2008 federal budget to assist in completing the project.

### **General Project Operation and Maintenance**

These funds are used for maintenance and repairs for all District non-park or IPA projects, and include 83 dams and 85 miles of levee. The most significant component of the FY2008 budget is \$1,510,000 item for land rights acquisition and rehabilitation construction of three PL566 dams (Papio Creek S-27, S-31 and S-32). The NRD is required to upgrade three dams from low to high hazard class, as a result of downstream development.

The remainder of this budget item is for activities such as repairs at Candlewood Lake Dam, Tekamah Mud Watershed Dam 4-1, Papio Creek bank stabilization (riprap) work and on going project maintenance such as mowing and spraying weeds at projects (Buffalo Creek Structures, Turtle Creek Structures, Wehrspann Wetland, Walnut Creek Structure, etc). General project maintenance will take on greater importance in the District operational plans and budget as infrastructure continues to age, necessitating more preventative maintenance.

## Papio Reservoirs

This program addresses the potential for reservoirs within the Papillion Creek Watershed, including potential Regional Stormwater Detention Sites and Water Quality Basins. In FY 08, the following expenditures are anticipated:

- a. Design, land rights acquisition, and construction of Zorinsky Water Quality Basin #2 located southwest of Highway 31 and West Center Road.
- b. Completion of the feasibility study on Sites 1 and 3C in Washington County.
- c. Preliminary design of Structure 8A near Bennington.
- d. Preliminary design of West Papio Regional Basin #5 in Sarpy County.
- e. Final construction payments for Shadow Lake near Papillion, and Site 13 near Elkhorn.
- f. Land rights acquisition for potential reservoir sites as the need arises.

Offsetting revenues for this item include NDEQ Stormwater Funds, a regional stormwater detention fee, and a reservoir reserve fund.

## Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership

The Partnership was formed in 2001 to address regionally common goals for water quality and quantity in the Papillion Creek Watershed and its membership consists of eight cities, two counties and the District. Operated as a separate checking account, the Partnership budget includes cash on hand from the previous year, anticipated interest, and annual contributions from all the Partnership members. The budgeted \$720,000 of expenses for F.Y. 08 include reimbursement to Omaha and the NRD for NPDES storm water permit activities and contracts with HDR Engineering and IMS. The IMS contract involves development and execution of a public involvement plan. A major component of this year's goals and objectives for the partnership is the completion of the Stage IV study by HDR Engineering. A major goal of the District is to formulate a comprehensive storm water management and water quality plan that addresses the needs of the eleven individual partnership members and the District as a whole.



## **Erosion Control Projects:**

### **Urban Conservation Assistance Program**

This program assists municipalities with the construction of projects to solve minor resource management problems. The maximum NRD expenditure per project is \$25,000. In FY 08, the District will cost share with Bellevue on two channel stabilization projects and with South Sioux City on the installation of three rain gardens for treating stormwater for water quality purposes. As Low Impact Development strategies become more prevalent throughout the District; it is anticipated that this program may take on a much larger role in addressing flood control and water quality issues.

### **Urban Drainage way Program**

This program cost shares with municipalities to address major stormwater management concerns. The program allows projects to be carried out over a period of years with a total NRD expenditure of \$1.5 million. In FY 08, the District will cost share with the Omaha Tribe to address flooding in the Village of Macy. These projects are Phases 3 and 4 of the effort.

### **Elk/Pigeon Creek Project**

As a direct result of the merger with Drainage District #5, the NRD now has the responsibility for operation and maintenance of 15 miles of levees along both Pigeon Creek and Elk Creek. By agreement, capital improvements are equally shared between the NRD's general fund and the revenue generated from special assessment. Recent capital improvements for Pigeon Creek levees are to level off the top of the levees, and to remove trees encroaching on the project.

Two grade stabilization structures have been built in Elk Creek to deter further deepening of the channel which adversely affected portions of the levee.

In FY 08, repairs to the Elk Creek levee and a continuation of the leveling of the Pigeon Creek levee are planned.

### **Conservation Assistance Program**

This program provides cost share assistance to agricultural landowners to install best management practices on their property. These practices include terraces, waterways and grade stabilization structures. In some cases, these funds are used to supplement other federal or state cost share programs, such as EQIP and NSWCP. In FY 08, \$1.3 million has been budgeted for this program.

Also included under this program are watershed projects of special interest.

### **Silver Creek Watershed**

This project was established in 1994 to reduce erosion and sedimentation rates in this Burt County watershed. Plans call for the installation of 24 grade stabilization structures, of which, nineteen have been completed. In addition, terraces and other best management practices will provide significant off-site benefits through sediment reduction in the Burt-Washington Drainage District. Construction will continue until all structures identified in the work plan are installed. In FY 2008, Sites 9, 11 and 42 at an estimated cost of \$800,000 have been budgeted will be constructed. Consultant fees for design are also included.

#### Pigeon Creek Watershed

This watershed project was approved by the District in 2001. The District and NRCS developed a work plan to reduce sedimentation in this Dakota County watershed. The work plan includes the construction of twenty (20) flood control and grade stabilization structures. The NRCS is providing technical assistance to design some of the sites, including Site 20 in FY 2008.

#### Pigeon-Jones Creek Site 15

Pigeon Jones Site 15, originally identified in the Pigeon Creek Watershed Plan, is a multipurpose dam and reservoir that will provide both flood control and public recreation benefits. The recreation site will consist of 595 acres of parkland surrounding a 238 acre body of water. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2010. Cost share assistance will be provided by the Nebraska Resources Development Fund. In FY 2008 a professional engineering services contract will be negotiated for the design of the structure, and to obtain permits for construction. \$400,000 has been budgeted for this purpose.

## **Water Quality Projects:**

### **Water Quality Grants**

The NRD is cost sharing with the Villages of Arlington (\$350,000) and Kennard (\$250,000) to address water quality concerns related to municipal wastewater. Both communities are in the process of decommissioning wastewater treatment facilities in favor of pumping to adjacent cities for treatment. The Village of Kennard's wastewater will be pumped to the City of Blair's treatment facility, while the Village of Arlington's wastewater will be pumped to the City of Fremont's facility for treatment. This program reflects the District's long range plan to regionalize water and waste water systems.

### **Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance**

In 1998, the District, along with the Lower Platte South and Lower Platte North NRDs and six state agencies (Department of Environmental Quality, Game and Parks Commission, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health & Human Services, Nebraska National Guard, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln), created the Alliance to ensure the wise use of natural resources of the lower Platte River Valley from Columbus to the mouth. In FY 08, the Alliance will conduct a River Obstruction Removal project near Camp Ashland, continue the Platte River Cumulative Impacts Study, continue the Environmental Carrying Capacity study, and help coordinate the efforts of the Nebraska Innovative Zone Commission. In addition, this fiscal year it is proposed that the District participate in addressing invasive vegetation management in the Lower Platte system in coordination and cooperation with the alliance, private property owners and several county weed boards.

### **Water Quality Monitoring**

The District's Groundwater Management Plan calls for the collection of groundwater data in the District. The District contracts with USGS to sample and test water from 93 irrigation wells and from nine well nests (a series of 2 or 3 wells at a single location that are screened at different levels of the aquifer) annually. The irrigation wells are separated into five groundwater areas and are sampled every three years. In FY 08, wells in the Missouri River basin are scheduled to be sampled. The District uses revenue from the Natural Resources Water Quality Fund (≈\$32,000) for this project.

In addition, the District contracts with USGS to operate and maintain a stream gauge on Omaha Creek at Homer.

### **Eastern Nebraska Water Resources Assessment (ENWRA)**

ENWRA is a groundwater study of eastern Nebraska sponsored by the six NRDs in Eastern Nebraska; the Nemaha, Lower Platte South, Lower Platte North, Lower Elkhorn, Lewis and Clark, and the Papio NRDs. Other cooperating agencies are the USGS and UN-L Conservation and Survey Division. An interlocal agreement was approved in 2006

that funded the first three years of the study. A Helicopter Electromagnetic (HEM) Survey was conducted in the three pilot project areas in 2007. In FY 08, the District's share of the costs is \$30,000, plus an additional \$47,000 for sampling and testing groundwater monitoring wells in a pilot area southwest of Gretna.

### Clean Lakes Construction

In 2005, the District entered into an agreement with the Savanna Shores SID to construct a water quality basin in the Walnut Creek Watershed. The agreement also called for a trail connection to be built by the SID into Walnut Creek. The District agreed to pay the SID \$100,000 for the basin and cost share on the trail, while the SID agreed to pay the NRD \$50,000 for the use of Walnut Creek property to mitigate wetland issues resulting from the development. The project was not completed at the end of last fiscal year.

### Chemigation

In 1986, the Nebraska Legislature passed legislation to require irrigators who apply agricultural chemicals and fertilizers through their center pivot irrigation systems to acquire a permit from the local NRD. To obtain a permit, the irrigator must demonstrate that the required safety equipment has been installed and is operational. Permit fees are collected to help offset the costs of this program and some are forwarded to the State of Nebraska (NDEQ).

In 2006, permits for 32 chemigation systems were issued. In 2007 30 permits were renewed and 4 new permits issued.

### Well Abandonment Program

This program was established in 1996 and provides cost share assistance to landowners to properly decommission wells no longer in use. Potential groundwater contaminants, such as pesticides, fertilizers, and other contaminants can flow directly into the groundwater through these old wells threatening private or public water supplies.

To date, over 740 wells have been properly abandoned under this program. For FY 2008, the P-MRNRD will continue to fund the proper abandonment of unused water wells. It is anticipated that the District will decommission 30-37 wells this fiscal year in which the District will receive \$4,300 dollars in funds from the Nebraska Water Well Decommissioning Fund.

### Nebraska Buffer Strip Program

This program provides incentive payments to landowners to establish permanent vegetation adjacent to surface waters to prevent sediment and other pollutants from entering the water. The program is funded by the State of Nebraska through fees imposed for the registration of pesticides and is administered locally by the NRDs.

## **Outdoor Recreation Projects:**

### **Recreation Area Development Program**

This program, established in 1989, offers cost-sharing to municipalities for the establishment and improvement of recreation areas with their jurisdictions. The cost share rate is 50%. In FY 08, projects have been approved with Bellevue (two projects), Papillion, and Omaha.

### **Omaha Neighborhood Park Program**

In 2004, the District approved an interlocal agreement with the City of Omaha to cost-share on the improvement of 75 neighborhood parks within the City. The District's share was \$1 million to be paid to the City in four annual installments of \$250,000. In FY 08, the last payment under this agreement has been budgeted.

### **Chalco Hills Recreation Area**

The District operates and maintains the Chalco Hills Recreation Area under a lease from the US Army Corps of Engineers. The area has been open to the public since 1987. In FY 08, in addition to routine operations and maintenance, the following special projects are planned:

- a. Repair the park loop road.
- b. Re-establish two (2) wildlife habitat plots within the recreation area.
- c. Complete rehabilitation of log cabin in Picnic Area A.

Also included in this section is the Natural Resources Center. In addition to routine operation and maintenance, the following special projects are planned:

- a. Paint exterior woodwork.
- b. Repair or replace retainer walls.
- c. Replace flat roof above entrance.
- d. New computer control system for HVAC in building.
- e. Increase Corps of Engineers space by 450 sq. ft.

### **Walnut Creek Recreation Area**

This recreation area will be operated and maintained by the District until October 1, 2007 when it will be turned over to the City of Papillion. Only routine items are planned.

### **Prairie View Recreation Area**

The District opened this recreation area in 2002. It was developed as a water quality basin above Newport Landing (Dam Site #6) near Bennington. In FY 08, in addition to routine operation and maintenance, the following special projects are planned:

- a. Revise tree planting plan for the area.
- b. Locate and install several park benches.

- c. In cooperation with the Newport Hill SID and at their expense, install a trail connection to the recreation area.

#### Elkhorn Crossing Recreation Area

This rustic area was constructed as a part of the Elkhorn River Bank Stabilization Project completed in 1989. In FY 08, in addition to routine operation and maintenance, the District plans to upgrade the boundary fence for the area.

#### Platte River Landing Recreation Area

This recreation area was constructed as a part of the Union Dike Improvement Project and was opened in 1992. In FY 08, in addition to routine operation and maintenance, the District plans to repair and/or replace the existing signage.

#### Elkhorn River Canoe Access Project

In 2004, the District conducted a study of the Elkhorn River in the District to identify potential sites for installation of canoe launch areas. Three sites were selected with the site near Highway 64 at Waterloo built first. In FY 08, the site near West Dodge Road will be constructed. A canoe ramp, parking lot, restroom facilities, landscaping, entrance sign and fencing is to be included.

#### **Trails Projects:**

In 1989, the Pappas Trails Plan was developed primarily to begin the process of making the District's flood control levees multi-purpose by utilizing the levee top as a recreational trail. The program has grown to include trails development throughout the District, either by direct NRD construction, or through cost share programs with other sponsoring municipalities.

#### Trails Assistance Program

This cost share program, adopted in 2005, assists sponsors of trail projects that have been approved for Transportation Enhancement funding through either the Department of Roads, or the Game and Parks Commission. The District splits the local share of project costs with the sponsors, usually 10% of costs. In FY 08, projects with the Village of Arlington, the City of Blair, the Winnebago Tribe (two projects), the City of Ralston, the City of Omaha, and the City of South Sioux City (two projects).

#### Mopac Trail (Highway 50 to Lied Bridge)

This segment of the Mopac Trail connects the District's parking lots at Highway 50 and the Lied Bridge, a distance of approximately five miles. This trail will ultimately connect the Cities of Omaha and Lincoln. In FY 08, the NRD plans to construct the trail at an estimated cost of \$1,700,000, of which \$500,000 in Transportation Enhancement funds

will be utilized. Professional engineering services during bidding and construction are also included.

#### Mopac Trail (Highway 50 to Chalco Hills)

This segment of the Omaha-Lincoln Trail connects Highway 50 and Chalco Hills Recreation Area. In FY 08, the design of this trail segment, and acquisition of right-of-way are anticipated.

#### Western Douglas County Trail

Under the leadership and guidance of Representative Lee Terry, the District received a special earmark of \$5.5 million over a five year period to construct a series of trails in Western Douglas County. The primary goal of the project was to connect Omaha (Elkhorn), Waterloo and Valley with a recreational trail. The project is a cooperative effort between the District, City of Omaha, Village of Waterloo, City of Valley, Village of Waterloo, and Douglas County. The project will ultimately include a connection to the Twin Rivers YMCA in Valley. In FY 08, the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of the initial phase of the project connecting the three communities are included in the budget. A pedestrian-only bridge across the Elkhorn River is also included. The estimated cost of the project is \$3.5 million, of which \$3.2 million will be provided by federal funds. The remainder of the local share will be provided by the communities involved, Douglas County, and the NRD.

#### Keystone East Connector Trail

The City of Omaha, in cooperation with the Kiewit Foundation and the NRD, has begun a project to connect the Keystone and Field Club Trails. The initial phase between the Keystone Trail and 45<sup>th</sup> Street has been approved for Transportation Enhancement funding and by the NRD under the Trails Assistance Program. Since construction of this trail is not anticipated until 2009, the NRD's share of the costs is not included in the FY 08 budget. Phase 2 and 3 of the project were planned for future years.

In an effort to accelerate the completion of the project, the NRD included funds in the FY 08 budget to design the final two phases of the project (45<sup>th</sup> Street to the Field Club), and to begin right-of-way acquisition, including property for possible trail head.

#### Missouri River Trail

The Missouri River Trail connects N.P. Dodge Park and the Washington County line which is to be built in two phases. Phase 1, completed in 2006, runs between N.P. Dodge Park and Ponca Road. Phase 2 runs between Ponca Road and the county line. In FY 08, construction of Phase 2 is anticipated to be completed. This includes funds for bidding and construction observation by a consultant. Some land rights costs are also included.

## **Forestry Fish and Wildlife**

### **Missouri River Corridor Project**

The Missouri River Corridor Project is a multi-objective endeavor to:

1. Renovate the decreasingly viable oxbow lakes and wetlands along the Missouri River for fish and wildlife habitat from South Sioux City (river mile 732) to the confluence with the Platte River (river mile 595),
2. Identify and establish cultural and historical interpretation centers along the route (i.e. Lewis and Clark, Audubon, Native Americans, etc.), and
3. Provide, where appropriate, river and lake access and development for recreation.

In FY 08, the following projects are planned:

1. Wetland Reserve Program – This is a cooperative venture with the Natural Resources Conservation Service whereby the NRD brokers funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NETF) to landowners and contractors to preserve and protect existing wetlands along the Missouri River. This program involves no NRD funds as all expenses are offset by NETF funds.
2. Missouri River Trail – This recreational trail extends from N. P. Dodge Park to the Washington County Line. Phase 1 from N. P. Dodge Park to Ponca Road was completed in 2007. Construction of Phase 2 from Ponca Road to the Washington County line will occur in 2008. Professional engineering services and the final land rights acquisition are also included. Transportation Enhancement funds from the Nebraska Department of Roads provide approximately 80% of the construction costs.
3. Blackbird Scenic Overview – In FY 08, the NRD plans to replace the interpretive panels at the site. Also included is the payment to the Omaha Tribe per agreement for operating and maintaining the site.
4. Back to the River – The NRD is a member of Back to the River, Inc., a non-profit organization that promotes wise use of the Missouri River in Nebraska and Iowa. In FY 08, the NRD contributes to the annual clean-up project along the river, and contributes staff time to the organization.
5. Gallup Campus/Miller Landing Trail – By agreement, the NRD is contributing \$1 million to the City of Omaha for this trail project. The agreement calls for five payments of \$200,000. In FY 08, the last, or 5<sup>th</sup> payment is included in the budget.
6. Hayworth Park – By agreement, the NRD is contributing \$1.25 million in three installments of \$334,000 to the City of Bellevue for expansion and rehabilitation of Hayworth Park.



### Wetlands Mitigation Banking

The District operates a wetland mitigation bank to provide wetland units for NRD projects, or, that can be sold to developers and others, to mitigate loss of wetlands due to construction. This project has a separate checking account that shows a cash balance and anticipates income from the sale of wetland units. The District's only bank, Rumsey Station, is located just south of the West Papillion Creek levee near 54<sup>th</sup> Street in Sarpy County. The entire Bank is designed to have 11.0 acres of wetlands when fully developed. However, due to dry conditions, the bank has only 3.5 acres of approved wetlands, most of which has already been sold or used for District projects. The District continues to monitor the site and is hopeful that additional credits will be available at the end of this year.

In FY 08, the budget includes funds for the acquisition of additional land at a new site. Potential sites may include Glacier Creek near 144<sup>th</sup> and State, an addition to Rumsey Station, or other site identified in a report completed in 2007. The District is also looking at the opportunity to add wetland bank credits during the construction of Silver Creek structures in Burt County.

### Heron Haven

In 1992, the District acquired the Heron Haven site located near 117<sup>th</sup> and West Maple Road. The District retained title to the land and the Omaha Chapter of the Audubon Society developed, operated, and maintained the site.

In 2005, the Friends of Heron Haven, a non-profit group, assumed operation and maintenance of the site from the Audubon Society.

In FY 08, the NRD will continue to assist with routine operation and maintenance of the site.

## **Improvement Project Areas**

Improvement projects are self-supporting projects under the District's guidance. No District funds are used in these projects.

### **Washington County Rural Water #1**

Constructed in 1980, this water supply system currently serves about 450 rural residences and the City of Ft. Calhoun. The 40-mile distribution system purchases its water supply from the Metropolitan Utilities District in Omaha. This system encompasses a small area of southeast Washington County and northeast Douglas County.

The pump station for this system underwent a recent renovation of the control system, and replacement of the pumps and motors in 2006. Anticipated capital improvements in the near future amounts to 'looping' two locations of the system with a 6 inch pipeline.

### **Washington County Rural Water #2**

This new system, which began operation in October, 2005, presently serves 240 rural properties. Water is initially purchased from the City of Blair, providing service to rural residences primarily south of Blair, and east of Hwy. 133. It is expected that this geographic area will receive a large amount of growth in the next 20 years. Interest free loans have been provided by the City of Blair and Washington County to oversize the distribution system to meet the expected demand of the future. This system is physically connected to Washington County RW #1 should an emergency supply of water be necessitated.

### **Thurston County Rural Water**

Water was distributed in this system in the spring of 1984. Water supply for this utility is purchased from the Village of Pender. The current customer base is about 140 hookups. An additional 17 hookups are considered "inactive". Other than the distribution system, a pump station and a 100,000 gallon water tower are maintained.

In FY 08, a capital improvement contemplated is a redundant waterline crossing under Logan Creek near Pender. Painting the interior of the water tower is also expected to occur within the next 2 years.

### **Dakota County Rural Water**

This system is currently comprised of about 660 rural hookups. The 100-mile distribution system in eastern Dakota County began operation in April, 1980. The system also maintains a 250,000 gallon water tower, a 30,000 gallon standpipe, and a small pump station. Maintenance personnel are stationed at the NRD office in Dakotas City. Recent capital improvements amounted to painting the interior of the water tower, and replacing the control system for the pump station.

### Western Sarpy Drainage IPA

The Western Sarpy Drainage District was organized in 1909 to address drainage and flooding problems in southwest Sarpy County. The drainage district encompasses approximately 7,540 acres of land along the Platte River from the mouth of the Elkhorn River to Interstate 80. The drainage district operated a series of drainage ditches and a flood control levee. In 1999, the Western Sarpy Drainage District merged with the District, with the NRD taking over operation and maintenance of the project.

In FY 08, the District will continue to operate and maintain the drainage ditches. The flood control levee is being improved under a cooperative venture with the Corps of Engineers. For additional information, see flood control summary.

### Elkhorn River Breakout IPA

In 1997 and 1998, the District cooperated with the Lower Platte North NRD (LPNNRD) in a flood control project on the Elkhorn River in Dodge County. The project was located in the LPNNRD, but benefits of the project extended into Douglas County. The District is cooperating by collecting operation and maintenance funds from benefited landowners in the District. Operation and maintenance will be provided by the LPNNRD.

### Elkhorn River Bank Stabilization IPA

Severe streambank erosion along the Elkhorn River throughout the District prompted landowners to petition the District for assistance in solving the problem. An application for RDF assistance was prepared and submitted to NNRC for their consideration. RDF funding levels forced limiting the project to a seven-mile stretch of the Elkhorn River from Highway 36 downstream to King Lake in western Douglas County.

NNRC approved 75% cost sharing on the lesser project. The District paid 15% of the costs with the remaining 10% assessed to benefited landowners. In addition, operation and maintenance costs are assessed to benefited landowners. Construction was completed in 1989, with maintenance performed as needed.

### Elk Pigeon Creek IPA

As a direct result of the merger between Drainage District #5 and the NRD, it has now become a responsibility to maintain 15 miles of levees along both Pigeon Creek and Elk Creek. By agreement, capital improvements are equally shared between the NRD's general fund and the revenue generated from a special assessment.