

June 23, 2017

NEWS RELEASE

Spring Water Levels Down Slightly in Central Platte NRD

(GRAND ISLAND, NE)- The Central Platte Natural Resources District released their spring 2017 static water level results at their June board of directors meeting on Thursday. The accumulated change since 1982 is 0.85 feet lower district-wide. Groundwater levels are measured annually from mid-April to mid-June. CPNRD's Groundwater Management Plan uses 1982 static groundwater levels as the base levels. Implemented in 1987, the Plan established maximum acceptable declines and a margin of safety for each of the District's 24 Ground Water Management Areas (GWMA). Luke Zakrzewski, GIS image analyst, reported that 15 of the GWMA's are above the 1982 groundwater levels and the remaining nine areas are below the set standards.

Zakrzewski said Dawson County had both the largest decline and the largest increase with northern Dawson and Buffalo counties (GWMA #9) down 12.15 feet, and southwest Dawson (GWMA #5) with an increase of 12.36 feet since 1982. As a proactive measure, the Plan has a trigger set that suspends supplemental wells and transfers into areas that have reached a 25 percent acceptable decline. Merrick County has one management area (#18) with two consecutive years above the 25 percent acceptable decline trigger and will now allow new transfers of irrigated acres and supplemental wells; while the southern management area (#19) has reverted to the 25 percent acceptable decline trigger regulations. The results of each county in CPNRD are available at <http://www.cpnrd.org>.

Six of the 24 GWMA's are currently in the 25 percent decline suspension. If the water table would fall to 50 percent of the maximum decline, Phase II would go into effect requiring mandatory reductions in irrigated acres and spacing limits for new irrigation wells would be established. The Central Platte NRD serves 11 counties including all of Dawson and parts of Frontier, Custer Buffalo, Hall, Howard, Nance, Merrick, Hamilton, Platte and Polk.

OTHER ACTION/AGENDA ITEMS

-Budget- The board reviewed and approved the proposed 2018 fiscal year budget of expenditures for the purpose of holding a public hearing next month. Barry Obermiller, board secretary, reported that the proposed budget would reduce tax asking by approximately \$400,000 compared to the 2017 FY budget. The hearing will be held at 1:45 p.m. on July 27, 2017.

-Tree Program- Kelly Cole, programs coordinator, reported that Central Platte NRD sold 35,350 conservation seedlings and 9.94 miles of fabric weed barrier. The tree sales are the lowest number sold since the NRD began the Tree Program in 1973, and the sales for weed barrier are the lowest in 21 years.

-Cease & Desist Request The board gave approval to file cease and desist orders on the four irrigation violations if they have not been resolved by June 30, 2017.

-Changes to Rules & Regulations The board received recommended changes to the NRD's Ground Water Management Program including changes to cease and desist enforcement procedures and removal of the 2 in 10 irrigation rule. Two sections referencing wells and irrigation run-off procedures have been removed because of redundancy. The board will review and discuss the changes in July with a public hearing to be held tentatively prior to the August 31st board of directors meeting.

-Natural Resources Conservation Service Joe Krolikowski, district liaison, reported that one goal of President Trump's proposed budget is to shift more of the role of conservation planning to the private sector, in coordination with NRCS. NRCS would provide training and certification for private entities to support the development of specialized conservation plans.

-Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Mick Reynolds, Middle Platte Basin representative, reported that the Water Sustainability Fund has \$15,755.520 available for water-related projects with applications being accepted from July 15-August 1, 2017.

-Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) Lyndon Vogt reported that the NARD board of directors took final action to host the 2020 North American Envirothon and approved the proposed three year budget for the event. Hosting the contest provides Nebraska with the opportunity to showcase the success of Nebraska's NRD system to manage resources on river basin boundaries to the top environmental science students and future leaders in North America. Over 260 students and 150 sponsors and teachers from the United States and Canada will be at the event, tentatively scheduled for Lincoln in July of 2020. Other NARD board action:

NRD Hall of Fame -- The Executive Committee approved a slate of candidates for the 2017 NRD Hall of Fame Award. Ballots were mailed to NARD Board members and NRD Managers on June 15th. There are three categories – NRD Board Member, NRD Employee and NRD Supporter. The inductees in each category will be announced during Husker Harvest Days at the NARD Building. The inductees will be formally presented the award at the NARD Annual Meeting in Kearney on September 25, 2017.

Deadline for Resolutions – The Legislative Committee set August 18, 2017 as the deadline for resolutions for consideration at the annual meeting. The NARD Annual Meeting is September 24-26, 2017, in Kearney, and the deadline needs to be at least 30 days in advance, so all districts have a chance to review the resolutions prior to the meeting. Resolutions received after August 18th will need 2/3 vote of the delegates for consideration.

NARD Awards -- The NARD Information & Education Committee elected Jim Johnson, South Platte NRD, as the NRD Director of the Year and Dennis Mottl of Palmer, NE as the Educator of the Year. The Native Vegetation Committee elected Scott Trost of Sidney, NE as Tree Planter of the Year, Waits Ranch of Tryon, NE as the Outstanding Grassland Conservation Award, and Western Nebraska Community College – Sidney NE Campus for the Community Conservation Award, and Ben and Paula Sue Steffen of Humboldt, NE for NRD Outstanding Soil Stewardship Award. The awards will be presented at the NARD Annual Meeting in Kearney on September

24-26, 2017 in Kearney. The NARD will notify and invite the award recipients to the award recognition luncheon.

-Cost Share The board approved six applications in the amount of \$20,420 for grassland conservation, prescribed burn, streambank stabilization and urban forestry through the Central Platte NRD and Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation cost share programs.

-August Board Meeting The August board meeting was moved to August 31 (a week later) due to the budget schedule and the time was changed to 1:00 p.m. to accommodate Duane Woodward's Retirement Open House. Woodward, engineering hydrologist, has been employed by the Central Platte NRD since 1992 and was previously employed by the Bureau of Reclamation from 1974-1992.

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