

December 21, 2018

NEWS RELEASE

Nominating Committee Recommends Bendfeldt and Reynolds for Central Platte NRD Chair & Vice-Chair

(GRAND ISLAND, NE) –Jim Bendfeldt of Kearney was re-nominated to serve as board chair at the Central Platte Natural Resources District’s (CPNRD) board of directors meeting on Thursday. Mick Reynolds of Wood River was re-nominated as vice-chairman by the nominating committee. The election will take place at the January 24th board meeting. Board officers may serve two, two-year terms. Bendfeldt and Reynolds are both eligible to serve another two-year term.

-Cease & Desist Order Update Sandy Noecker, data compliance officer, reported that 18 of the 88 Cease & Desist Orders issued to producers in November for failure to submit crop report forms for the CPNRD’s Nitrogen Management Program are still out of compliance. If those producers irrigate, they will be in violation of the Cease & Desist Order. Potential penalties for violation are a fine of \$1,000 - \$5,000 per violation, ineligibility for NRD cost-share, and restriction from transferring any irrigated acres. Noecker said the 18 producers out of compliance represent about two percent of the 900 producers in the program.

-Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Flood Risk Reduction Project The board approved:

-Change Order #1 to VanKirk Bros. to increase the contract amount by \$67,270 for a total contract price of \$639,440.19. The increase was due to the requirement to excavate 2,200 cubic yards of unsuitable subgrade soils.

-Extension of substantial completion date on the Silver Creek Levee project due to the U.S. Corp of Engineer permits approval being delayed. The completion date was extended to February 15, 2019.

-Platte River Recovery Implementation Program Mark Czaplewski, biologist, reported on the Program’s Governance Committee (GC) meeting on December 10, 2018. The GC approved the \$27.9 million FY2019 Budget and Work Plan, including \$18 million for Water Plan implementation. Czaplewski said there was considerable discussion on whether to discontinue the proposed Lakeside Slurry Wall Pit Project because of increasing project costs and the prospect for cheaper water options. One option includes the continuance of the Central Platte NRD/Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District pilot program. More discussion is needed with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources regarding project permitting and operation. The Program’s continued funding of phragmites (and other noxious and invasive plant) control was also debated. Wyoming’s opposition to their proportionate share has reduced phragmites control funding to \$200,000 annually. Several representatives on the Committee are changing including: Mike Thabault from the Denver office of the USFWS, Don Kraus with Central NPP&ID (being replaced with Devin Brundage), and pending retirements by Don Ament from Colorado and Harry LaBonde from Wyoming. The Downstream Water Users appointed Czaplewski as their representative on the Program’s Finance Committee.

-Outdoor Sign The board awarded a contract to Mayhew Signs in the amount of \$13,716 for a new outdoor office sign. The sign is expected to be installed in spring 2019.

-Voting Delegates The board elected Deb VanMatre as voting delegate and Doug Reeves as alternate for the Nebraska Association of Resources District's Legislative Conference to be held January 29-30, 2019, at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln, NE.

-Cost-Share The following were approved:

-Added a maximum amount of up to \$10,000 per landowner for the brush management cost-share program through the Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Program. The program helps remove brush/non-herbaceous plants to restore natural plant community balance either mechanically or chemically. Brush management may also be used to prepare for prescribed burns. The change will be effective on July 1, 2019.

-Added a soil moisture capacitance probe cost-share program for landowners participating in the Central Nebraska Irrigation Project. CPNRD and The Nature Conservancy will each contribute \$62,500 to enter into a three-year agreement with landowners to lease/purchase a probe. As part of the agreement, participants will be required to provide the NRD access to telemetry/data and a paid invoice to be reimbursed for the equipment. The project was initiated to implement conservation technology in the Central Platte region. Soil moisture data will complement the current suite of technology – a flowmeter, weather station, and pivot telemetry – all pieces indicating real-time field conditions. The new program will take effect immediately.

-Eight applications through the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation and the Central Platte NRD cost-share programs were approved for planned grazing, underground pipeline, center pivot incentive, tree planting, and well decommissioning in the amount of \$25,555.55.

-Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Mark Czaplewski, biologist, reported that Central Platte NRD was awarded \$56,270 for the CPNRD Conceptual Multi-Use Dam Design project through the Water Sustainability Fund; and the Lower Loup NRD was awarded \$250,000 for the LLNRD Cover Crop Water Use Study, which CPNRD co-sponsored.

-Audit Report- Allison Petr, Lutz Accounting, presented the 2017/2018 audit report.

-Awards Bob Schanou of Shelton, NE., received an outgoing service award for his 13 years of service. Schanou was appointed in 2000 for two years to finish Carl Gangwish's remaining term and was elected each term since 2007. He served as Programs Committee chairman and was active on the Water Resources, Western Projects, Variance/Appeals, and Budget committees. Schanou did not file for another term. Staff members Dan Clement, water resources specialist, and Deb Jarzynka, district secretary, received recognition awards for 30 years of service. Sara Carlson, district secretary in the Central City office, received a 10-year recognition award.

-Search Committee Letters of interest will be accepted until December 31, 2018, for the Sub-district 4 board vacancy. The candidate selected will be appointed at the January Board of Directors meeting for a term of two years. Sub-district 4 includes portions of East Central Buffalo County, including part of Northeast Kearney, and Northwest Hall County. Letters of interest should be sent to CPNRD, 215 Kaufman Ave. Grand Island, NE 68803 or emailed to Lyndon Vogt at: vogt@cpnrd.org. Call (308) 385-6282 for more information.

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