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NEWS RELEASE

Central Platte NRD Board Views Impacts of Flood Risk Reduction Projects

(GRAND ISLAND, NE) – On Thursday, the Central Platte Natural Resources District’s board of directors saw the positive impact that their flood risk reduction projects provided during the “cyclone bomb” that hit the state two weeks ago. While presenting drone videos and photos taken of the projects, Jesse Mintken, CPNRD assistant manager, said the projects are working as designed throughout the District; which ranges from Gothenburg to Columbus.

Drone footage of the recently constructed Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Flood Risk Reduction Project in northwest Grand Island showed the two detention cells holding over 5,000 acre-feet; which is equivalent to water 15 inches deep throughout the project area south of Hwy 2 and east of Hwy 281. This project also includes four dry dam sites and a levee. The Prairie Creek flood waters that breached Hwy 2 and Airport Road in Grand Island took place at the final reach of the levee. Mintken said although the levee itself is nearly completed, construction on the final three culverts are scheduled to be completed this spring and tied into the levee. Damage assessment will be completed when the flood water recedes. Currently, it appears there is minor damage to one drop structure and some erosion near the inlet on Silver Creek.

The Wood River Flood Control Project that protected southern Grand Island was completed 15 years ago. The levee system allows flood waters to be rerouted out of the City of Grand Island during high water events. Mintken said the gauge at the Alda link on the project measured just 0.02 shy of the peak measurement during the 1967 flood.

Buffalo Creek Watershed structures in Dawson, Custer, and Buffalo counties also held historic amounts of water; including the B-1 Reservoir that held over 4,000 acre-feet and was within six inches of going out the spillway.

Lyndon Vogt, general manager, said “the District is indebted to the commitment and leadership of former manager Ron Bishop, former assistant manager Milt Moravek, and the board of directors over the last 20 years who had the foresight to form the partnerships needed to see these projects to completion.”

Other discussion and action items:

-Water Programs Updates The board approved a motion from the Water Quantity Committee to release a request for proposals to update the Groundwater Quantity Management Program. The committee discussed the water programs meetings held this month in Amherst and Kearney to address groundwater decline concerns in Sub-Area 9 of the NRD’s Groundwater Management Program in Buffalo and Dawson counties. Groundwater levels in northern Dawson and Buffalo counties are down on average 12.39 feet since the 1982 baseline year. Groundwater levels have continually declined in the area since 2001. Vogt made it clear that the decline needs to be stabilized.

An open discussion session provided area landowners and producers the opportunity to visit with the NRD about their concerns and to give their thoughts on management of the aquifer. Although the Central Platte NRD would prefer that landowners reach the goal to stabilize the groundwater decline in the area on their own, if groundwater levels continue to drop over the next few years then regulations would need to be implemented. The 300 landowners who have certified acres in the decline area were personally invited to the meetings as well as the public. A current groundwater level map can be found at: cpnrd.org/groundwater-quantity.

-UNL TAPS Request The board approved a funding request from Chuck Burr, UNL, in the amount of \$1,000 for the Testing Ag Performance Solutions (TAPS) Program for the 2019 growing season. TAPS hosts farm management competitions for local producers to make management decisions regarding irrigation techniques and timing, fertilization, and marketing. The competitions include UNL scientists, farmers, and state and local agency teams. The program also looks at additional tools and techniques offered by the ag industry to make irrigated crop production more profitable and address water and nitrogen efficiency.

-Urban Conservation Request- The board approved one application for the Urban Conservation Program. Funding was approved in the amount of \$10,000 to the City of Gothenburg for bank stabilization at Lake Helen. The Urban Conservation Assistance Program is designed to assist sponsors establish, develop, and improve public recreational areas.

-Managers Report Lyndon Vogt reported that

- Central Platte NRD submitted a disaster request for NRDs facilities damaged by the flood event.
- Farmers who were affected by flooding and were not able to take soil samples for the Groundwater Quality Management Program will not be required to submit samples this year.
- The NRD's 2009 Chevy Malibu was totaled in an accident and will be covered by the at-fault party's insurance.

-Legislative Report Mark Czaplewski, biologist, reported the following natural resources bills passed this month: LB 243 that creates a Healthy Soils Task Force; LB 48 that changes provisions relating to sufficient cause for nonuse of a water appropriation, and LB 302e that merges the State Energy Office with and renames Department of Environmental Quality.

-Preliminary Budgets The Eastern Projects, Western Projects, and Programs committees reviewed preliminary budget items for Fiscal 2020. The Program's cost-share and information/education budgets were forwarded to the Budget Committee.

-Natural Resources Conservation Service Joe Krolikowski, district liaison, reported that NRCS recently held their FY2020 Local Working Group (LWG) meeting. The Local Working Group recommends to the NRCS State Conservationist how conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) would be used most effectively in their area by evaluating and prioritizing the resource concerns through their NRD. These recommendations can include special target areas, cost-share rates, which conservation practices should have cost assistance, or how many dollars could be needed. This work group allows local input into how Federal dollars are spent in their area and across the state.

-Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Mick Reynolds, Middle Platte Basin representative, reported that the new officers for the Commission are: Scott Smathers, chairman and Jeff Steffen, vice-chairman. Emily Rose will be the new legal counsel in place of LeRoy Sievers who is retiring. Reynolds also reported the budget for new applications will include \$11 million (not yet approved) plus \$5.3 million in carry-over funds.

-Cost-Share The board approved five cost-share applications in the amount of \$4,999.00 through the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation and the Central Platte NRD cost-share programs for the following practices: flow meter, tree planting, capacitance probe, and well decommissioning.

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