

August 30, 2019

NEWS RELEASE

Central Platte NRD's 2020 Budget Levy Down

(GRAND ISLAND, NE) The Central Platte Natural Resources District's board of directors approved the levy for their 2020 fiscal-year budget at 0.023799; therefore, a homeowner with a home valued at \$100,000 will pay \$23.80 for conservation benefits provided by the Central Platte NRD including flood reduction, nitrate management, water use management, soil health, cost-share to producers, recreation, and education.

A property tax request of \$4,204,344.77 was approved at the July board meeting; which is down \$323,412.83 compared to the 2019 budget. The total valuation received from the district's 11 county assessors increased .5122% to \$17,666,288,850.

OTHER ACTION/AGENDA ITEMS

-Schroeder Property The board selected JEO Consulting to evaluate management alternatives for property purchased in Dawson County in the amount of \$109,620. Proposals were also received by EA, Olsson, and the Flatwater Group. The 157-acre property was purchased in April 2018 with the intention of retiring the pivot and gaining 107 acre-feet (AF).

CPNRD intends to retire the groundwater irrigated acres to receive benefits from the retirement, but also wishes to evaluate other potential uses of the property to maximize the hydrologic benefit to meet requirements of the Integrated Management Plan, the Basin-Wide Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management for over-appropriated areas in the Platte River Basin, and Nebraska's New Depletions Plan.

-Recharge Agreement A recharge agreement with the Nebraska Community Foundation for the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program was approved. The agreement changes the way the CPNRD is paid for groundwater recharge via seepage through the Six Mile, Cozad, Thirty Mile and Orchard Alfalfa canals in the non-irrigation season. The total amount diverted will be measured by CPNRD using automated measuring and recording gates and adjusted by subtracting any deliveries or releases made and recorded by the irrigation district. The non-irrigation season will begin when the canals stop releasing water for irrigation and end when the canals begins releasing water for irrigation as determined by CPNRD.

-Drainage Discussions The Eastern Projects Committee discussed possible future programs for flood relief and reduction. Brian Fredrickson, Olsson, and Keith Kurz, City of Grand Island, also discussed drainage issues south of the Wood River Flood Reduction Project between South Locust Street and Highway 281.

-Recreational Trails Program Grant Resolution The board approved a resolution to improve the Richard Plautz Crane Viewing Site Trail Project near Gibbon. The resolution will be included with the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant application to cost-share on the improvements. The proposed application will provide a free, wheelchair-accessible viewing platform and nature trails for public crane

watching. Each year, this site provides hundreds, if not thousands of guests, the ultimate viewing experience while keeping them at a safe distance from this critical habitat and off nearby public roads, bridges, and private property.

CPNRD is proposing to use the RTP funds to cost-share the removal of the site's existing asphalt nature trail and replace it with a concrete recreational trail, construct a new concrete parking lot, and renovate portions of the crane viewing platform. The NRD's goal is to provide the best, safest viewing experience of our unique and valuable Platte River wildlife.

-Manager's Report Lyndon Vogt, general manager, reported the following:

-Vogt received a letter from Westervelt Ecological Services saying they are no longer interested in developing a 320-acre conservation easement to implement a wetland mitigation bank in Buffalo County.

-Vogt reported that the NRD's flood reduction projects in Grand Island are full after receiving over 12" in the month of August.

-The NRD's legal counsel is working on a brief to dismiss an application for the Platte Republican Diversion filed by the Central Nebraska Public Power District, Tri-Basin and Lower Republican Natural Resources Districts. Groups opposed include the Central Platte, North Platte, and Lower Loup NRDs, as well as the Nebraska Public Power District.

-The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture recently received confirmation that they will receive funding through NRCS to share an education coordinator with CPNRD and NRCS. CPNRD's share will be \$16,000 annually and the education coordinator will be housed at the CPNRD office in Grand Island.

-CPNRD submitted two NRCS Watershed Rehabilitation Program grant applications to reduce flooding and erosion damage for the Wood River and Spring/Buffalo Creek areas west of Kearney.

-Voting Delegates The board elected Deb VanMatre, Gibbon, as voting delegate and Jay Richeson, Gothenburg, as alternate for the Nebraska Association of Resources District's annual conference to be held in Kearney in September.

-Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Mick Reynolds, Middle Platte Basin representative, reported that 19 applications are being reviewed and ready for the board to review by October 1st. The filing breakdown includes: CSO-Omaha \$1,100,00; 8 applications \leq \$250,000; and 10 applications $>$ \$250,000 for a total of \$28,651,602 in requests.

-Natural Resources Conservation Service Joe Krolkowski, District liaison, reported that NRCS has been extremely busy working with communities that have experienced flooding this year. Some of the emergency programs they have established are the Watershed Protection Program, Livestock Mortality Program, and Cover Crops for Disaster Assistance Initiative.

Krolkowski said the Cover Crops Initiative is being used at a very large scale in the State and in the Central Platte, with the bulk of our applications and obligated contracts in the Central Platte coming from Merrick County. As of August 21st, 241 contracts were obligated statewide, treating 45,864 acres, totaling over \$1 million. By the end of the FY, NRCS is estimating 518 contracts and over \$2.2 million for Nebraska.

The Central Platte has 74 contracts obligated, treating 14,107 acres, totaling \$364,240 dollars. With the Initiative, expects 144 contracts and \$708,025. The deadline for field offices statewide to have contracting work ready for review is September 13th. The deadline to have all the contracts obligated in the state is September 27th.

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Estimated breakdown by NRCS Field Office in Central Platte NRD	# Contracts	Obligated Funds
Central City	107	\$529,286.00
Grand Island	15	\$68,468.00
Kearney	3	\$12,440.00
Lexington	19	\$97,831.00
Totals	144	\$708,025.00

-Cost-Share 14 applications were approved through the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation and the Central Platte NRD cost-share programs for re-nozzle, underground pipe, pipeline to pivot, center pivot incentive, flow meter, phragmites, cover crops, well decommissioning.

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