

September 3, 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Central Platte NRD's 2021 Budget Levy Down

(GRAND ISLAND, NE) The Central Platte Natural Resources District's board of directors set the levy for their 2021 fiscal-year budget at 0.022982 at the August board meeting on Thursday. With the levy set, a homeowner with a home assessed at \$100,000 will pay \$22.98 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.

Total requirements for the general and sinking fund are \$24.7 million with the required property tax of \$4,059,000; a decrease of \$147,325 compared to the 2020 budget. The total valuation received from the district's 11 county assessors decreased 0.0734% to \$17,653,315,322.

The major expenditures in the 2021 budget are \$4 million to meet future Integrated Management Plan compliance, and \$2.1 million in Watershed Flood Prevention and Operations grants to complete watershed assessments.

OTHER ACTION/AGENDA ITEMS

-Platte Valley Weed Management Request The board approved a motion to invest \$500,000 over three years in an endowment for the Platte Valley Weed Management Area (PVWMA) to fund the annual cost of maintaining water conveyance in the Platte River. Since 2009, the PVWMA has treated approximately 26,000 acres of invasive plant species within flowing channels of the Platte River in Dawson, Buffalo, Hall, Merrick, Hamilton and Polk counties within the NRD.

-Managers Report Lyndon Vogt, general manager, reported that five producers who were issued cease and desist orders in May remain out of compliance with the Groundwater Quality Management Program including Bernard Katzberg, Artie Moeller, Mike Munsterman, William Soll, and Richard Urban. Katzberg, Moeller, and Urban violated the cease and desist order and has been served by legal counsel.

-Appeal Denied An appeal request to increase certified acres in Dawson County was denied.

-Building Committee The board approved a bid from Barber Appraisal of Phillips, Nebraska, in the amount of \$2,950.00 to appraise the Central Platte NRD buildings and shops.

-Voting Delegates The board elected Jim Bendfeldt, Kearney, as voting delegate and Jay Richeson, Gothenburg, as alternate for the Nebraska Association of Resources District's (NARD) business session to be held in Kearney later this month. Due to ongoing safety challenges with the pandemic, NARD cancelled their annual conference scheduled for Sept. 28-29, in Kearney including the trade shows,

breakout sessions and awards ceremonies. The business session, NARD committee meetings and board meeting will go forward in-person. NARD requested that the NRDs consider sending their NARD Board member as the delegate to ensure appropriate spacing.

-New NeDNR Director Jim Bendfeldt, NARD board member, reported that Tom Riley, Flatwater Group, was selected to replace Jeff Fassett as director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

-Field Demonstrations Presentation Dean Krull, CPNRD/UNL demo project coordinator, gave a presentation on field demonstration projects located on producers' fields over the last 40 years for the NRD's water quality management program.

-Natural Resources Conservation Service Joe Krolikowski, district liaison, reported that the agreement between the Central Platte NRD and NRCS to create a new Watershed Work Plan-Environmental Assessment for the Elm/Turkey Creek Watershed in Buffalo and Dawson counties has been awarded and signed by both agencies. Lyndon Vogt, general manager, reported that a request for bids has been sent out and will be available for consideration at the September board meeting.

Two other WFPO agreements for the Lower Wood River Watershed Improvement Project in Buffalo, Hall, and Merrick counties; and the Spring/Buffalo Creek Watershed Improvement Project in Dawson County were approved for funding last spring.

With the Elm/Turkey Creek agreement, NRCS will pay 100% of the cost of the new watershed plan up to \$742,500.00. In total, the funding available to the Central Platte NRD over the next two years for the three watershed agreements is \$2,092,500. Richard Vaughn is the NRCS Watershed Coordinator in the State Office and will be the Government Representative for the projects.

-Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Mick Reynolds, Middle Platte Basin representative, reported that eight applications were received for the Water Sustainability Funds that totaled \$5,946,000. The application review committee will meet in September with selections to be approved in October at the Natural Resources Commission's quarterly meeting.

-Cost-Share Nine applications through the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation and the Central Platte NRD cost-share programs were approved in the amount of \$21,070.27 for brush management, pipeline to pivot, center pivot incentive, cover crops and well decommissioning.

-Upcoming Board Meetings: September 24, October 22, November 19, December 17.

#####