

KNOW YOUR NRD



Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

Summer, 2016



Tree Packers - Staff members work to assemble tree and shrub seedling orders in April. The NRD sold 29,000 seedlings for planting within the district in 2016. Varieties offered are especially suited for windbreaks, wildlife habitat, erosion control and many other uses. Nearly 1 million seedlings are planted through similar NRD programs statewide each year. Most of them are native and come from Bessey Nursery, in the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey. Ordering for 2017 will begin this fall.

A Productive Summer

by NRD General Manager Glenn Johnson



The colors of the season seem to be fluorescent yellow and orange, with the most common flowers being those of "cone" flowers. Construction is everywhere you look, on every road you drive, every trail you ride, and every utility you enjoy. I don't ever recall street repairs and reconstruction as widespread as currently underway, along with ALLO beginning the Lincoln-wide fiber installation, continued residential construction in downtown Lincoln, drive-through coffee shops (can't have too many), office and commercial construction, and for the rest of the summer, roof and siding replacements in southeast Lincoln.

This Natural Resources District is busy with construction projects currently underway or ready to go this summer. These include several repair projects on Deadman's Run

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Protecting Lives • Protecting Property • Protecting the Future

Convenient Connections

The most recent extension of Lincoln's Salt Creek Levee Trail was officially opened on National Trails Day, June 4th. The paved stretch completes an outdoor exercise loop in the UNL City Campus area and connects Haymarket Park with the Antelope Valley Trail. Now students, North Bottoms residents or anyone else can utilize it to visit Oak Lake, Haymarket Park or the Bob Devaney Sports Center. A little more ambition will get you to Wilderness Park.

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Budget Goes Biennial

For the first time, the NRD is planning a two-year budget. A new state law permits political subdivisions, like the NRDs, to approve a biennial budget if they choose and the Lower Platte South Board of Directors believes it would be cost-effective to do so. Board Treasurer Ray Stevens said, "The procedure and schedule for developing a budget remains the same as in recent years. We are simply considering a two-year budget plan, instead of just one."

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Ground Water UP-date

Spring 2016 ground water levels were higher for the second straight year. The NRD measures water levels of wells in all five of the district's ground water reservoirs and the Remaining Area, then averages the levels in each. Measurements this spring, compared to spring of 2015, show ground water levels are several inches to several feet higher across the district (see table). Ground Water levels in all six areas, likewise, showed increases last spring over drought-affected levels in 2014.

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Trails

Convenient Connections

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It's the newest segment of trail that follows the top of the Salt Creek Levee, which helps to protect a large part of the city from flooding. The NRD has built most segments of the Salt Creek Levee Trail, then turned them over to the City of Lincoln for administration and maintenance. NRD General Manager Glenn Johnson said, "We hope UNL students will continue to utilize this new trail in combination with the Antelope Valley Trail, along the east edge of campus and the Salt Creek Levee Trail to the west as an exercise loop around campus for walking, jogging, biking, and going to class or to work."

The next extension of the trail is already being planned and construction is expected to begin later this year, along the north bank of Salt Creek from the UNL soccer and tennis complex on 14th Street, east to 23rd Street and Cornhusker Highway.



Homestead Re-opens

The NRD's Homestead Recreational Trail is open again, after strong storms in May, 2015 caused \$170,000 in damage to the trail surface and to bridges. The Federal Emergency Management Agency helped fund the repairs. The portion of the trail maintained by the NRD stretches from south of Saltillo Road to Cortland. Lincoln-area trail users are advised to use the Roca trailhead, at Roca Road, until the City of Lincoln is able to repair storm damage to it's adjacent Jamaica North Trail later this year.

Paperless Board Meetings



Look for a link to our new Board Meetings webpage at lpsnrd.org. It's in the left column, near the bottom and links to a page designed to help directors and the public prepare and follow-along during LPSNRD Board meetings. The page has access to many important documents and maps and it links to the next meeting agenda, one week prior to the meeting. The NRD Board and staff hope this page helps eliminate the need for distributing board meeting information on paper.

SWIF Website

The NRD has begun a multi-year project to update Lincoln's Salt Creek Levee and the public can follow progress on a new website created by the project consultant, JEO Consulting Group. Check out saltcreeklevee.jeo.com.

Double Budget

Budget Goes Biennial

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In addition to the four public opportunities listed below, each subcommittee of the NRD Board will have met 3-4 times to discuss their parts of the budget and the Board's Finance and Planning Subcommittee will have met 6-7 times before the budget is approved in August. By reducing these meetings in odd numbered years, we hope to save staff time and develop a more efficient process.

NRD Budget Public Input

- **Wednesday, June 15th, 6pm**
NRD Board of Directors Meeting and Public Input Session
- **Wednesday, July 20th, 7pm**
NRD Board of Directors Meeting and tentative budget approval
- **Thursday, August 11th, 7pm**
Public Hearing on budget and on budget level
- **Wednesday, August 17th, 7pm**
NRD Board of Directors Meeting and budget approval

All meetings are at the NRD office, 3125 Portia Street, Lincoln.

Web or Print?

Our *Know Your NRD* newsletter is available in both printed and electronic versions. Look for the printed newsletter in District newspapers in February, June and October. Have a link to the electronic version, which includes convenient web links to interactive maps, more detailed information about the NRD and more, delivered right to your inbox. All you need to do is visit our newsletter subscription page, at Ipsnrd.org, under Publications, to sign up. The NRD will not share your email address.



NRD Project Protects Cedar Creek

The Village of Cedar Creek, in Cass County, received 50% cost-sharing through the NRD's Community Assistance Program to control streambank erosion near a main roadway along the Platte River. The project not only protects the road, but also village utilities. The streambank was repaired and these weirs were created to reduce river current near the shoreline.

Look Out Below!

Ground Water UP-date

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Special regulations and irrigation allocations that took effect in March of 2014 in the designated Dwight-Valparaiso-Brainard Special Management Area of the district will remain in effect through the 2016 irrigation season and the NRD Board will consider future allocations late this summer.

We also sample wells in our district-wide network to monitor ground water quality. In 2015, we tested 218 samples from 195 different wells for various pollutants, depending on the location of the well and other factors, but all samples were tested for nitrates, which is the district's most common water quality concern. High levels of nitrates in water can inhibit the oxygen-carrying capacity of blood in humans, especially infants. The health of livestock can also be affected.

GROUND WATER RESERVOIR	SPRING '15 TO SPRING '16
Crete-Princeton-Adams	+ 0.42 feet
Dwight-Valparaiso	+ 3.00 feet
Lower Salt Creek	+ 3.30 feet
Missouri River	+ 1.59 feet
Platte River	+ 0.37 feet
Remaining Area	+ 2.29 feet

*See Ipsnrd.org & click Programs for reservoir boundaries.
A positive number means the water level has risen.*

If wells in an area, such as a ground water reservoir or one of the district's Community Water System Protection Areas (CWSPA), reach certain trigger levels, the NRD can encourage best management practices or even require them. Fortunately, none of the five ground water reservoirs or the Remaining Area reached a trigger level for any pollutant in 2015, including nitrates. Several CWSPAs remain under Phase II and Phase III designations.

The "2015 Ground Water Management Plan Review" has many more details of our measuring, sampling and other ground water-related activities last year. The report is available at Ipsnrd.org; click on "Programs," then "Ground Water." More information about ground water reservoirs, the Dwight-Valparaiso-Brainard Special Management Area and CSWPA phase designations is also available on the website.

Election Results

Subdistrict 8 incumbent Larry Hall and challenger Paul Morrison advanced in the NRD's only Primary Election race in May. Look for a complete listing of NRD General Election races in the October issue!

NRD Board

Here are your NRD Board representatives. The Board meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month at the NRD office in Lincoln. More information is available at Ipsnrd.org, click on About Us, then Board.

Subdistrict

- 1 Don Jacobson, W Lincoln
David Potter, Valparaiso
- 2 Daryl Bohac, Waverly
Mark Spangler, Murray
- 3 Mike DeKalb, NE Lincoln
Vern Barrett, Ceresco
- 4 Larry Ruth, Walton
Joe Skopp, SE Lincoln
- 5 Greg Osborn, W Lincoln
Bruce Johnson, W Lincoln
- 6 Jeremie Kerkman, NW Lincoln
Deborah Eagan, NW Lincoln
- 7 Ann Bleed, NE Lincoln
Richard Bolte, NE Lincoln
- 8 Larry Hall, SE Lincoln
Ron Svoboda, SE Lincoln
- 9 Milt Schmidt, SE Lincoln
Larry Zimmerman, SE Lincoln
- 10 Ray Stevens, S Lincoln
Karen Amen, S Lincoln

At-large

David Landis, Lincoln

Thanks Glenn

Exit Interview

The night before retiring General Manager Glenn Johnson sat down to reflect on his 44-year NRD career for this newsletter, there were tornado sightings in Lincoln, but, fortunately, damage was minimal. Rainfall was not minimal, so, just as he has done throughout his career, Johnson monitored projects like the Salt Creek Levee, the Antelope Valley Project and the Stevens Creek Watershed Project to make sure they were functioning properly. Johnson admits he will miss that part of his job whenever it rains significantly after his August retirement, but he is quick to point out he can still watch stream gauge levels on the USGS website and will gladly help out if asked. After all, those are projects he has helped maintain for the safety of Lincoln residents, homes and businesses for a long time.



Glenn and Elaine Johnson plan to travel for fun after Glenn's retirement in August. They have a daughter and a son.

Johnson has helped maintain the NRD itself in much the same way. On NRD Day One, in 1972, Johnson was one of three employees who reported for work at a downtown Lincoln office building. He'd been hired as Assistant Manager and his office, which he says was the same size as the elevator he rode up on, was on a different floor than the General Manager and Secretary's offices. Johnson spent most of those first weeks getting acquainted with the new NRD law, touring the district and hoping someone would show up at his office soon to install a phone.

Ten years later, Johnson's boss, Hal Schroeder, retired and Johnson is still only the second general manager the district has had. Here are some other thoughts and memories:

Most memorable workdays:

- Opening of the first segment of the MoPac East Trail
- Completion of the Weeping Water Watershed Project
- The day the \$10 million Antelope Valley Project loan was paid-off

Single most satisfying career accomplishment:

- The Antelope Valley Project

Hopes he is remembered in his career as someone who:

- Is a team player and a team leader
- Thinks and plans ahead
- Is willing to be innovative

Johnson said he leaves the NRD with hopes it continues to maintain existing infrastructure, "because it is so difficult to catch-up if you get behind." He hopes the NRD continues to rely on partnerships with other entities and he hopes the NRD, "continues its leadership posture in natural resource issues like flood control, water supply and water quality." The NRD, in return, hopes Johnson stops by often and tells us how he's enjoying his well-deserved retirement.

Biggest changes in natural resource management:

- There is now genuine public input in projects, starting early in the planning process
- NRD now leads project development instead of federal and state government
- Many more local projects are now funded without federal or state help
- Diversity of programs offered by the NRD has expanded greatly.

Next Manager/Familiar Face

Zillig to Replace Johnson as GM

The NRD is fortunate to be replacing a general manager of 34 years with someone who has been the NRD's assistant manager for 34 years. Paul Zillig was named general manager designate by the NRD Board of Directors in March, after a three-month search by the board and will take over as general manager upon Glenn Johnson's retirement on August 16th.



Zillig is a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, with a degree in Agriculture, majoring in Natural Resources and Agricultural Economics. Zillig said he is looking forward to leading the NRD as it continues to work on solutions to flooding in the Deadman's Run Watershed in Lincoln, makes improvements to the Salt Creek Levee System, finishes the MoPac East Trail Connector Project, continues watershed rehabilitations and implements the NRD's Integrated Management Plan for water resources. He and his wife, Janet, live in Lincoln and have three grown children.

A Productive Summer

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and Antelope Creek; saline wetland restoration at Marsh Wren; a flood control dam in Seward County; work on Salt Creek levees; flood reduction projects with Waverly, Murray, Valparaiso, and Hickman; boat ramp at Red Cedar; new sections of Salt Creek Levee Trail, N14th to Cornhusker and a railroad undercrossing at J Street; and bridge repair on the MoPac East Trail; and major agricultural conservation projects. Get your yellow vest and hang on!

NRD Project Update

- Havlat Seward County Road Structure Dam** - 168th Street, south of Pleasant Dale. Completion expected in July.
- Rosa Parks Way Trail Project** - Salt Creek Levee connector trail under Rosa Parks Way. Awaiting railroad right-of way.
- Salt Creek Levee, Lincoln** - Multi-year project to update levee. Updating levee operation and maintenance manual. Temporary tie-back levee installed at Folsom Street and Rosa Parks Way. Planning for permanent levee there is nearly complete.
- Salt Creek at Hickman Bank Stabilization** - Repair of damage from 2015 spring storms, recreational trail relocation. Total cost \$84,000. 50% NRD. Project on temporary hold.
- Marsh Wren Saline Wetland Restoration** - along Salt Creek, east of 48th Street, Lincoln. Construction by Yost Construction. \$630,000. Completion expected late in 2016.
- Antelope Creek, 39th to 40th Streets** - Spring 2015 storm repairs. Awaiting FEMA approval.
- Antelope Creek at 28th Street** - Bank stabilization and replace two structure pipes. Under construction.
- Red Cedar Lake Boat Ramp** - Water level drawn down for boat ramp work. Completion date undertermined.
- Waverly Ash Hollow Dry Dam** - Landrights phase. Construction expected this summer.
- Homestead Trail** - Storm repairs completed. Lincoln-area users start at Roca trailhead.

We're Social!

Social media is a great way to monitor how the NRD is protecting lives, property and the future. Like the NRD on Facebook at LPSNRD, follow lowerplattesouthnrd on Instagram and search lower platte south nrd on You Tube.

Did you know...

the NRD staff actively keeps our 21 directors informed about programs and projects? Directors recently attended staff-led tours of Upper Salt Watershed Dam 19-B near Cheney, gabion structures (baskets of rock used to stabilize streambanks) in Lincoln, a tour of the completed Antelope Valley Project, and the Salt Creek Levee System.