



## LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

3125 Portia Street | P.O. Box 83581 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-3581  
P: 402.476.2729 • F: 402.476.6454 | [www.lpsnrd.org](http://www.lpsnrd.org)

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### Memorandum

**Date:** February 25, 2026  
**To:** Lower Platte South Natural Resources District Board of Directors  
**From:** Jodi Delozier, Communications Coordinator  
**Subject:** Minutes for Information and Education Subcommittee Meeting

The Information and Education (I&E) Subcommittee met on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 5:02 p.m., to review current and upcoming environmental education events as well as the status of public communication. Subcommittee members present were Stephanie Matejka, Gary Aldridge, John Yoakum, Christine Lamberty, Suzanne Mealer, and Larry Ruth. Director Matejka filled in as Chair for Director Seacrest due to illness. Others in attendance included Board Chair Bob Andersen and staff members Jodi Delozier, Adam Sutton, and David Potter. I&E Subcommittee member Susan Seacrest and Tom Green and staff member Sam Elofson were not present; however, a quorum was established.

The first item of business was an overview of the District's public communication efforts. Delozier presented Elofson's report, which included a brief overview of the spring *Know Your NRD* newsletter, the new website, print and digital outreach efforts, and in-house project and program work. Delozier emphasized that website modifications are ongoing, including the addition of a Google optimization feature to improve searchability. Elofson's efforts include designing new recreation and trail signs, creating digital and print ads, and developing informational handouts. Both Delozier and Elofson collaborate on outreach materials, including the multi-platform use of the District's new videos.

The second agenda item provided a summary of past educational events, including both District-led programs and partner-led events, i.e., Windbreak Workshop, Nebraska Ag Expo, and Full Moon Wetland Walk. Delozier is coordinating several upcoming events that will require director participation, including the Husker Lawn and Leisure Show, Return of the Thunderbirds, and Lincoln Earth Day. Notification will be sent to directors via email later this month. She emphasized the importance of collaborating with natural resource agencies and partner organizations to expand the District's outreach. Both Sutton and Delozier also participate in career days and science fair judging competitions to encourage youth engagement in conservation and environmental education.

Adam Sutton provided an update on spring youth education programming. He will continue leading high school biology field trips and Nature Nights and will launch a new event, Test Your Well Week (March 30–April 3). Additional spring programming includes Arbor Day tree presentations; Butterflies and Worms in the Classroom events at schools and city libraries; distribution of Kindergarten Seed Kits; and natural resource classroom presentations throughout the district.

Sutton responded to director questions regarding Envirothon and the new Test Your Well Week initiative. He also summarized ongoing programs, including the second-grade habitat field trip to Lincoln Children's Zoo, first-through third-grade life cycle hikes at Pioneers Park, Prairie Immersion field trips at Spring Creek Prairie, and the seventh-grade pilot program.

Delozier concluded the meeting by asking if there were any further questions.

There being no further business, Acting Chair Matejka adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

PC: I&E subcommittee file

**Past notable events**

- Windbreak Workshop – September 2025
- Nebraska Ag Expo – December 2025
- Full Moon Wetland Walk – February 1
  - Location – Shoemaker Marsh
  - Partner – NGPC, Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership
  - 100+ participants
- Career Day at UNL East Campus and employee panel – February 18
- NACD Annual Conference – San Antonio, TX, February 16-19
- GWMP SAC Meetings – 2/24/26 and 2/25/26

**Upcoming Events**

- Southeast Regional Envirothon – March 3
  - Lincoln
  - In coordination with NARD
- Fire and Fermentation – March 5
  - Partner with SCP
  - To promote prescribed burns and its benefits to birds, wildlife, and prairie
- Husker Lawn and Leisure Show – March 13 to 15
  - All volunteer slots filled
- Test Your Well Week – March 30 through April 3 (LPSNRD)
- Return of the Thunderbirds – April 11
  - Indian Center
  - 10am – 3pm
  - Volunteers needed
- Lincoln NW Career Day – April 15
- Lincoln Earth Day – April 25
  - Innovation Campus
  - 10am – 2pm
  - Volunteers needed
- Touch a Truck – April 25
  - Ashland (nation-wide event)
  - 10am – 1pm
  - Pumper truck

- State Envirothon – April 29
  - Hastings, Prairie Loft
  - In coordination with NARD
- Marsh Wren Hike – May 6
  - Partner with Audubon Society of Omaha, NGPC, Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership
- Prairie Corridor Hike – TBD in May
- Biochar Event – June
  - Partner with NFS
- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) – June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>
  - LPSNRD
  - Discover the LPSRND – An Overview of our Work and Impact
  - 9-10:30am
- Wachiska Tour of the Wildside - June
- Saline Wetlands Education Series – August through October 2026
- Other Activities
  - Science Fair Judging for high school and college undergraduates
  - Platte River outdoor Discovery Program at PRSP
  - Assisting NRDs with EE events
    - GW Festival – CPNRD (May)
    - Water Works – PMNRD (May)
    - Natural Resources and Career presentation in Crete – LBBNRD (Feb.)

## **Outreach**

- Nebraska Public Media
  - Using videos and logo as a digital tile to promote our brand on PBS, Backyard Farmer, and other program channels.
- Radio
  - Recent promotion of tree sales and Backyard Prairie Pollinator Program
- Print/Digital
  - Use of LJS digital ads and print when necessary
  - Spring Affair newsletter
  - The Voice, Ashland, Waverly, and Wahoo newspapers
  - Cassgram

### **Spring 2026 *Know Your NRD* Newsletter**

- Drafting and organizing content for the Spring issue.
- Working through layout direction and prioritizing stories.
- Identifying any final content needs.
- On track at this point.

### **Website Updates**

- Continuing to make updates as content comes in.
- Added Google optimization to the website search function, which should significantly improve search accuracy and user experience. Google learns how to search over time.
- Added more helpful board-related resources for transparency and ease of access, including uploading and organizing subcommittee minutes dating back to 2022.

### **Recreation & Trail Signage**

- Working on a mix of new recreation and trail signs, as well as replacements for existing signage.
- Designing and reviewing consistency in branding and messaging and coordinating on next steps for production/installation.

### **Animated Explainer Video Marketing Plan**

- Building out a marketing and rollout plan for the animated explainer video.
- Outlining how it will be released across website, social, email, and presentations.
- Identifying shorter cut-down clips for social and targeted messaging.

### **Additional Ongoing Projects**

- Various print pieces including coloring mats, stickers, and other outreach materials.
- Routine communication requests and time-sensitive updates.
- General monitoring of social and engagement.

## **Youth Environmental Education Programs**

### **Current & Upcoming Initiatives**

I'm excited to share an update on our Youth Environmental Education efforts. Engagement continues to be extremely strong, and demand for our programming highlights the value these experiences provide to schools and families across the District.

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### **High School Biology Field Trips**

Locations: Platte River State Park and Wildwood Lake Wildlife Management Area

- Sign-up opened Monday — all but one of nine field trip days filled within 30 seconds.
- We are offering nine full days, each with morning and afternoon sessions.
- Students rotate between dip-netting for aquatic organisms and guided ecological hikes.

Key Focus Areas:

- Ecosystems and biodiversity
- Invasive species
- Land management practices
- Aquatic ecology

The most impactful component is simple: getting students outdoors and engaged in hands-on exploration. Research consistently shows time in nature improves academic performance, attention, stress levels, and overall well-being.

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### **Arbor Day Tree Presentations**

- Staff classroom visits to 12–15 elementary schools this spring.
  - Each student receives a free seedling grown by Plant Nebraska (formerly NSA).
  - Presentations overlap our spring field trip- Arbor Day is April and the weather is warmer.
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### **Test Your Well Nights**

- Collaboration with local FFA chapters.
- Recently partnered at East Butler in Brainard. TODAY
- Residents with private wells can bring samples for nitrate testing.

### **Test Your Well Week (March 30 – April 3)**

- District-wide opportunity for private well owners to check their nitrate levels.
- Environmental Education Assistants (EEAs) and NRD staff will conduct nitrate testing throughout the week.

These programs continue to strengthen community partnerships while addressing water quality awareness.

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## **Family & Community Engagement**

### **Family Nature Nights**

- This spring – partnerships with local elementary schools including:
    - St. Peter Catholic School (first-time partner)
    - West Lincoln Elementary
    - Huntington Elementary
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## **Strategic Partner Programs**

### **7th Grade Field Trip Sponsorships**

Locations include:

- Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center
- Pioneers Park Nature Center
- UNL – East Campus prairie
- Approximately half of 7th graders participate annually ~1,500 students
- We cover admission costs to each location.
- Site experts lead programming focused on ecology and natural resource careers.
- A successful fall pilot was completed, with another pilot scheduled this spring.
- Growing collaboration with Lincoln Public Schools, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and partner agencies.

### **2nd Grade Habitat Field Trips**

- Offered District-wide at the Lincoln Children's Zoo.

### **Prairie Immersion Field Trips**

- Hosted at Spring Creek Prairie and Pioneers Park Nature Center.
- Currently utilized primarily by non-LPS schools.

### **1st–3rd Grade Life Cycle Hikes**

- Hosted at Pioneers Park Nature Center.
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## **Classroom-Based Programs**

- **Butterflies and Worms in Lincoln Libraries** – a NEW partnership, building on our current classroom programs
  - **Butterflies and Worms in the Classrooms** – LPS and Non-LPS 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms.
  - **Kindergarten Seed Kits** – Native wildflower seeds available to non-LPS schools for in-class germination projects.
  - **Additional Classroom Presentations & Outreach** – Customized programming available upon request.
    - **Ground water, wetlands, NE wildlife, natural resource career presentations**
    - **Wyka Wetland Field Trip**
    - **Local Science Fairs / Nature Events**
    - **Outdoor Discovery Program w/ NGPC**
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## **Staffing Support**

Our Environmental Education Assistants (EEAs) play a critical role in delivering, supporting, and expanding these programs across the District.

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## **Overall Impact**

Across all grade levels — from kindergarten through high school — we are:

- Removing financial barriers
- Strengthening school and agency partnerships
- Supporting science standards
- Promoting water quality/ natural resource awareness
- Increasing student exposure to natural resource careers
- And most importantly, getting young people outdoors and connected to Nebraska's natural resources

Demand continues to exceed capacity, which speaks strongly to the value and reputation of our programs.