



# LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

Know Your NRD • Fall 2025

**PROTECTING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

3125 Portia St, Lincoln, NE



402-476-2729

# PROTECTING WATER, PRESERVING YIELDS: WAVERLY PRODUCER LEADS BY EXAMPLE

Dick Dames, a Waverly area producer with a long-standing history in farming and a willingness to adopt innovative management practices, began working with Tyler Benal, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) Drinking Water Protection Specialist, in the fall of 2023. Tyler introduced Dick to the Spring Nitrogen Application Program (SNAP), which promotes best management practices such as nitrogen fertilizer timing and split application during the growing season—instead of applying in fall or winter. This approach is designed to mitigate nitrate contamination in the ground water supply—helping to protect the health of both rural and urban water users—while decreasing the potential need for Waverly to construct and maintain a costly water treatment facility.

Additionally, Dick took part in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's On-Farm Research (OFR) Network during the 2024 growing season. His results showed a substantial reduction in nitrogen applied to his corn crop without any loss in yield. Based on this research and the grain market, he chose to reduce his 2025 nitrogen application by 30 lbs. on all his corn crop acres.

Dames expressed strong support in encouraging others to participate in SNAP and UNL's OFR. He cites several key benefits including the opportunity to explore a best management practice without financial risk and a reduction in nitrogen application without any loss in yield.

Dick's experience demonstrates that programs like LPSNRD's SNAP can successfully reduce nitrogen use while maintaining productivity, offering both

environmental and operational benefits particularly in areas near public water sources. Other LPSNRD cost-share opportunities include cover crops, fertilizer meters, nitrogen management, soil sampling, water quality sampling, and well decommissioning. In addition to LPSNRD programs, financial and technical assistance is available through NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help improve agricultural operations and protect our natural resources.



Collaboration for cleaner water and productive fields: (L-R) Tyler Benal, LPSNRD; Dick Dames, Waverly producer; and John Nelson, Nebraska Extension.

# TREE-VIA NIGHT BRINGS CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY TOGETHER



On Wednesday, August 6th, 2025, friends and neighbors filled Code Beer Co. for Tree-via Night, a fun twist on trivia that paired local craft beer with engaging conversations about trees – locally, nationally, and beyond! Hosted by the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) with support from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and Nebraska Forest Service, the evening turned into an easygoing mix of laughter, learning, and community connection.

With Code Beer Co.'s welcoming space as the backdrop, Tree-via Night provided participants an engaging opportunity to expand their knowledge of natural resources in a relaxed environment.

## East Central Land Judging Competition

The Lower Platte South NRD will be hosting the 2025 East Central Land Judging Competition in October! This regional event challenges high school students to assess soil structure, evaluate land for crop production, and recommend best management practices.

Winners of the regional contest will advance to compete in the State Land Judging Competition. State winners then have the opportunity to represent Nebraska at the National Land Judging Competition. This year, the district's own Elmwood-Murdock FFA represented Nebraska in the 2025 National Contest.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Here are your LPSNRD Board representatives. The Board meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month at the NRD office in Lincoln.

### SUBDISTRICT 1

Don Jacobson, SW Lincoln  
Gary Hellerich, Valparaiso

### SUBDISTRICT 2

Seth Hawkins, Plattsmouth  
Mark Spangler, Murray

### SUBDISTRICT 3

Melissa Baker, NE Lincoln  
Ken Vogel, NE Lincoln

### SUBDISTRICT 4

Gary Aldridge, SE Lincoln  
Larry Ruth, Walton

### SUBDISTRICT 5

John Yoakum, W Lincoln  
Suzanne Mealer, W Lincoln

### SUBDISTRICT 6

Anthony Schutz, NW Lincoln  
Deborah Eagan, NW Lincoln

### SUBDISTRICT 7

Chuck Hassebrook, C Lincoln  
Luke Peterson, C Lincoln

### SUBDISTRICT 8

Christine Lamberty, SE Lincoln  
Tom Green, SE Lincoln

### SUBDISTRICT 9

Lisa Lewis, SE Lincoln  
Bob Andersen, SE Lincoln

### SUBDISTRICT 10

Stephanie Matejka, S Lincoln  
Susan Seacrest, S Lincoln

### AT-LARGE

Dave Landis, Lincoln

# REINFORCING THE FUTURE:

The LPSNRD has been actively involved in water improvement projects across the district, with a particular focus on streambank stabilization, flood control, and maintaining the structural integrity of waterways. Check out what your NRD is doing for you:

## Weeping Water 5K

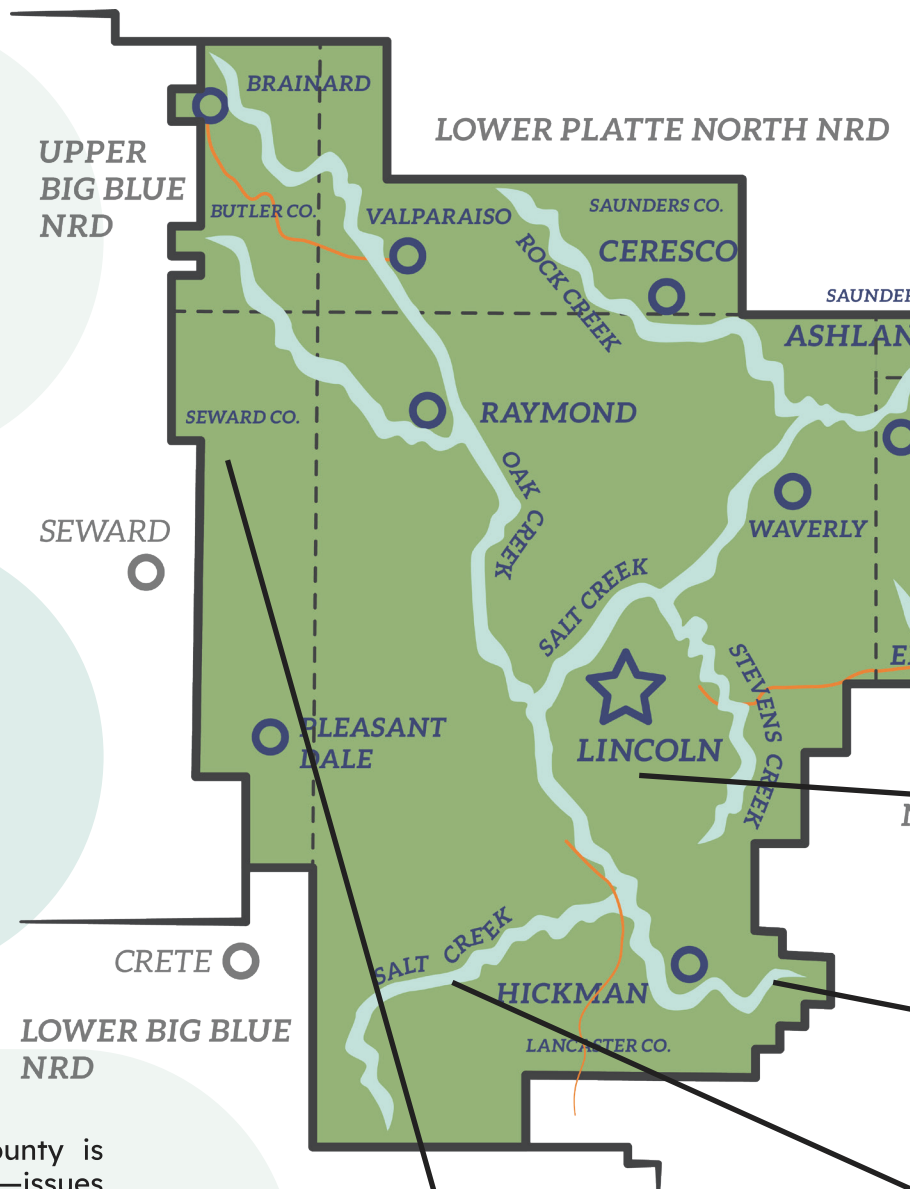
The Weeping Water 5K structure rehabilitation was completed in July 2025. Crews regraded the dam and reinforced both the structure and plunge pool with durable rock riprap. These improvements will help guard against shoreline erosion and ensure the dam continues to protect downstream areas from flooding.

## US 38-3 and 18-8 Dam Rehabilitation

In the months ahead, rehabilitation work will begin on the Upper Salt Creek 38-3 and 18-8 dams in our district. Over time, the existing principal spillway and outlet structure have corroded—posing risks of seepage and potential structural damage. To ensure safety and function, both dams have been redesigned and plan to be rehabilitated this fall.

## Janssen Road Structure Rehabilitation

The Janssen Road structure in Seward County is experiencing pipe separation and corrosion—issues that, if left unaddressed, could compromise the dam's performance and safety. To fix this, the structure has been redesigned to include a durable HDPE (high-density polyethylene) pipe system, replacing both the drawdown and outlet components. Construction is scheduled for completion in fall 2025 and is being carried out in partnership with Seward County.



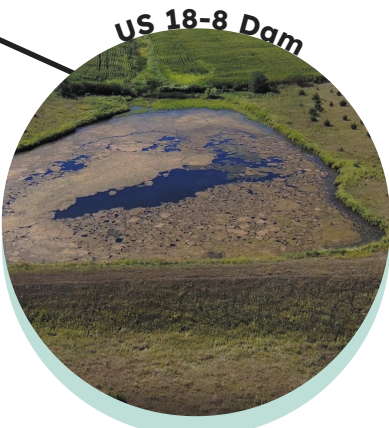
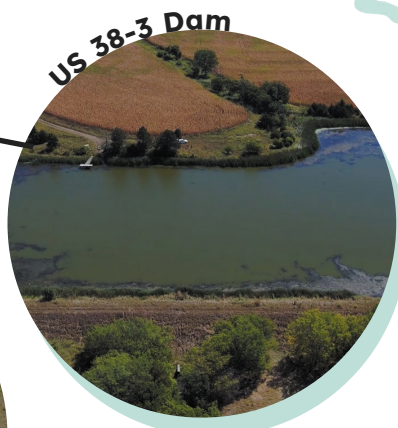
# DAM REHABILITATION & STREAMBANK STABILIZATION UNDERWAY



## 27th and NE Parkway

### Beal Slough Streambank Stabilization

Ongoing erosion issues along the Beal Slough Creek channel near 27th and Nebraska Parkway have made way for a new stabilization project, currently in the design phase. Early plans call for reshaping the eroded bank, backfilling, and reinforcing the area with durable rock riprap to prevent further damage. Construction is tentatively planned for fall of 2026.



These current and upcoming projects will not only replace aging infrastructure but also reinforce it—helping to safeguard nearby communities, support agricultural productivity, and preserve our natural resources well into the future.

A complete list of cost-share programs, descriptions, requirements, and applications can be found at:

<https://www.lpsnrd.org/programs/landowner-cost-share>.



### Community Forestry Program

The Community Forestry Program gives neighborhoods, towns, cities, and organizations a chance to improve community spaces or replace trees damaged or lost to severe weather. Funding is available on a cost-share basis to help cover the expense of tree purchases. Eligible applicants include homeowners' associations, community groups, business associations, and municipalities.

Because funds are limited, applications are reviewed and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Projects supported by this program not only improve the appearance of shared spaces but also provide long-term benefits such as shade, wildlife habitat, cleaner air, and stronger community pride.

### Landscape Tree Program

Individual property owners can apply for financial support through the Landscape Tree Program to replace trees damaged or lost to severe weather. Urban and rural landowners within the LPSNRD are eligible to receive 75% reimbursement on the cost of a nursery tree, up to \$115 per tree.

Applicants must plant their trees within district boundaries, and the program is open to a variety of species suitable for Nebraska's climate. Whether planting for shade, shelter, or beauty, this program helps make it easier and more affordable for landowners to contribute to the health and diversity of local landscapes.

## LPSNRD EXPANDS FALL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Fall is in the air—bringing cooler days, the start of a new school year, and the excitement of autumn sports!

The NRD's Environmental Education (EE) Team is gearing up to facilitate a variety of EE programs throughout the District. The fall program lineup includes a wide range of opportunities—Butterflies in the Classroom, Worms in the Classroom, Family Nature Night at select elementary schools, Test Your Well Night, classroom presentations on natural resource topics, and perhaps best of all, high school

biology field trips! The Lower Platte South is especially excited to lead biology students on these experiential learning adventures this year. Each fall, these field trips provide nearly 1,000 students the opportunity to use dip-nets and other equipment to boost their knowledge while investigating water quality, wildlife habitat, ecosystems, and biodiversity in the field.

To support these field trips, the NRD has hired four additional part-time Environmental Education Assistants:



**NAME:** Lauren Lilienthal  
**STUDIED:** Environmental Studies and Sociology  
**FAVORITE LAKE, TRAIL, OR PARK:** Pioneers Park Nature Center



**NAME:** Elise Anderson  
**STUDYING:** Agricultural Leadership; minors in Child, Youth, & Family Studies & Communication  
**FAVORITE LAKE, TRAIL, OR PARK:** Ponca State Park



**NAME:** Katelyn Plambeck  
**STUDYING:** Agricultural Economics; specialty in Public Policy; minor in the Engler program.  
**FAVORITE LAKE, TRAIL, OR PARK:** Glenwood Archeological State Preserve



**NAME:** Emily Deming  
**STUDYING:** Fisheries and Wildlife  
**FAVORITE LAKE, TRAIL, OR PARK:** Ponca State Park

**UPCOMING LPSNRD EVENTS** → **October 4th, 2025 from 9am-11am**  
Windbreak Planning & Planting Workshop  
→ **October - TBD**  
Glacial Till Salt Creek Tiger Beetle Event

# GUIDED HIKE SHOWCASES THE PRAIRIE CORRIDOR AT HONVLEZ PRAIRIE

On August 13th, 2025, community members joined the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) for a guided evening hike at Honvlez Prairie along the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch. The event gave participants the chance to step into a restored tallgrass prairie and experience firsthand the plants, wildlife, and wide-open beauty of this unique landscape.

Conservation professionals from LPSNRD, Spring Creek Prairie

Audubon Center, Nebraska Games and Park Commission, and Pioneers Park Nature Center led the hike and shared their knowledge and expertise. Guests learned how native grasses and wildflowers support pollinators, birds, and other wildlife, along with the management practices used to sustain them.

As the group walked along the mowed trail, conversations sparked about the importance of

preserving natural spaces close to Lincoln, and the role prairies play in connecting people to Nebraska's outdoor heritage. The evening offered a mix of education and appreciation, with attendees able to ask questions, swap observations, and enjoy a peaceful walk among late-summer blooms.

With the perfect weather and the Honvlez Prairie as a backdrop, the hike was both a showcase of conservation progress and a reminder of how much there is to explore in our own backyard. Events like these highlight the Prairie Corridor's role as a living classroom and a community space.

If you'd like to learn more about the project and upcoming opportunities to explore, visit our Prairie Corridor webpage at <https://www.lpsnrd.org/prairie-corridor-haines-branch> or scan the QR code below:



## Lower Platte South Natural Resources District Partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service on Little Salt Creek Watershed Plan

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's NRCS, in partnership with the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, received approval for the Little Salt Creek Watershed Improvement Plan in southeastern Nebraska. Covering over 29,000 acres in Lancaster and Saunders Counties, the plan outlines 120 projects focused on saline and freshwater wetland restoration, erosion and sediment control as well as habitat protection—including the federally endangered Salt Creek tiger beetle. Total project costs are estimated at \$10.3 million, with \$7.8 million in federal assistance and \$2.5 million from local

sponsors. NRCS previously contributed \$430,000 to complete the plan, and LPSNRD is now eligible to request additional federal funding to implement the projects.

"As local sponsors, we are most appreciative of NRCS's commitment toward completing the watershed plan," said Will Inselman, LPSNRD Resources Coordinator. "Their partnership has helped us identify and eventually complete essential habitat protection and improvements in the Little Salt Creek Watershed."

## TRAILS

MoPac East Trail  
Homestead Trail  
Oak Creek Trail  
Lied Bridge - Platte River  
Connection

## WETLANDS

Lincoln Saline Wetlands  
Nature Center  
Marsh Wren Saline Wetland  
Whitehead Saline Wetland

## WMAs

Bobcat Prairie  
Cottontail  
Little Salt Fork Marsh Preserve  
Little Salt Springs  
Meadowlark  
Merganser  
Red Cedar  
Tanglewood  
Timber Point  
Wild Plum  
Wildwood

# EXPLORE YOUR NRD

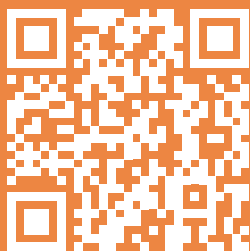


With autumn in full swing, it's the perfect time to enjoy the crisp air and vibrant colors of the Lower Platte South NRD!

after a quiet escape or a scenic fall backdrop, there's something for everyone.

Our 15+ recreation areas offer trails, lakes, and wetlands for fishing, hiking, biking, or horseback riding—no park pass required. Whether you're

The Lower Platte South NRD works to conserve land, water, and wildlife so these natural spaces remain open and sustainable for generations to come.



**SCAN TO SEE ALL OF THE  
LPSNRD RECREATION  
OPPORTUNITIES!**

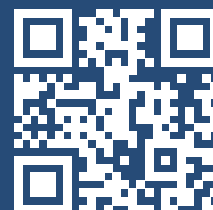
Or visit: [www.lpsnrd.org/recreation](http://www.lpsnrd.org/recreation)

## Get Digital

Know Your NRD is available in print from district newspapers and electronically by subscription through [LPSNRD.org](http://LPSNRD.org), where you can access district news and other information in a variety of languages. You can also keep up with us by subscribing to our regular email updates.

LPSNRD shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, disability, familial status, veteran status, or marital status in any of its activities or operations.

**3125 PORTIA ST, LINCOLN, NE 68521**  **(402) 476-2729**



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