



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

Know Your NRD • Winter 2025



PROTECTING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

3125 Portia St, Lincoln, NE



402-476-2729

DISCOVER WINTER ON THE PRAIRIE

Once the cool, crisp winter air begins to nip at your nose, most people curl up by the fire to enjoy the warmth. However, there's another way to stay cozy—by getting outside and taking a brisk walk or hike through the prairie.

At first glance, the prairie may appear to be sleeping through the winter, with its sea of muted browns and reds signaling the end of the growing season. But while native plants rest quietly underground, wildlife is hard at work preparing for the frosty months ahead.

Fortunately, the opportunity to experience the quiet beauty of winter prairies exists just outside Lincoln city limits. The Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch Project, initiated in 2012, was created to conserve and restore native tallgrass prairies, expand recreational

opportunities through a trail system connecting Pioneers Park to Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, and increase awareness of Nebraska's native ecosystems.

With numerous protected grasslands in close proximity to these two major conservation areas, the project was a natural fit. What began as an idea in 2012 has now flourished into a developing corridor of protected virgin and restored tallgrass prairie—featuring seven public properties covering more than 2,500 acres ready to explore.

While trail construction is still in progress, a short 1.5-mile segment from Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center north toward Denton is planned. In the meantime, visitors are encouraged to explore District-owned properties year-round

using mowed service roads or by following the prairie wherever it leads. No pass or permit is required, and parking is available at designated access points.

For maps and more information, visit www.lpsnrd.org/recreation/prairie-corridor-haines-branch or scan the Qr Code below. For hours of operation at Pioneers Park Nature Center or Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, please contact them directly. We hope to see you out exploring your prairies soon!



IMPROVING FLOOD PROTECTION ALONG DEADMANS RUN

The Deadmans Run (DMR) Flood Reduction Project is a joint effort between the LPSNRD and City of Lincoln. The project's purpose is to provide flood protection for residences near N. 33rd Street, N. 48th Streets, Leighton Avenue, and Huntington Avenue and remove approximately 480 properties from the 100-year mapped floodplain.

As the project's design plans reach 60% completion, the LPSNRD and City of Lincoln will provide opportunities for public engagement early next year. Meanwhile, a tree-clearing project will take place this winter near 56th and Holdrege on an NRD-owned parcel adjacent to the project channel. The cleared area will make room for a detention basin, a key component of the overall project. For additional information about DMR, visit: www.lincoln.ne.gov/DeadmansRun.

DMR QUICK FACTS

- Removes an estimated 480 homes, businesses, and structures from the mapped floodplain
- Addresses erosion challenges
- Project extends from 48th Street downstream to Cornhusker Highway
- Initial tree clearing project includes arborist removal of 48 trees for access and clearing 3.3 acres of additional brush and trees
- 50/50 joint partnership between NRD and City, with UNL cooperation, and some state funding

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS AT LPSNRD



David Potter Named General Manager



The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District Board of Directors has appointed David Potter as General Manager. Potter has served as Assistant General Manager for the last nine years. He is also a former LPSNRD Board Member (14 years), county board member, city planner, county zoning administrator, community planning and landscape design consultant, and has an agriculture background. As a life-long resident of rural Valparaiso and a Kansas State University graduate, Potter brings both staff and board-level experience to the position. He has extensive knowledge of LPSNRD programs, finances, and partnerships.

David Hibler Appointed to Board

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District welcomes David Hibler of rural Plattsmouth as the new Director representing Subdistrict 2, filling the vacancy left by former Director Seth Hawkins. His experience and dedication to local conservation efforts will help guide District priorities in protecting water quality, managing flood control, and promoting sustainable land use. As a Director, Hibler will work closely with fellow board members to represent the interests of Subdistrict 2 residents and property owners and advance the District's mission of responsible natural resources management.



Steve Herdzina Promoted



The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District has promoted Steve Herdzina to Water Resources Coordinator. Herdzina has been with the District since 2008, serving most recently as Water Resources Compliance Specialist. Over his 17 years with LPSNRD, he has played a key role in implementing ground water management programs, monitoring compliance, and supporting water quality initiatives. In his new role, Herdzina will coordinate the District's water resources projects and partnerships, continuing his long-standing commitment to protecting and managing southeast Nebraska's vital ground water systems.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Here are your LPSNRD Board representatives. Regular board meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm.

SUBDISTRICT 1

Don Jacobson, SW Lincoln
Gary Hellerich, Valparaiso

SUBDISTRICT 2

David Hibler, 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

THE BIG FOUR THIS FALL:

High School Biology Field Trips

The NRD's high school biology field trips wrapped up at the end of October — and we're proud to report a perfect record! Despite much-needed rains, not a single trip was canceled due to weather. Over 1,000 high schoolers joined us "over the hills and through the woods" to discover the magic of our natural resources up close.

Students rolled up their sleeves and pant legs to net aquatic critters and dig through mud and algae, discovering what lies beneath the surface. Along the trails, they hiked through shady woodlands and open prairies, spotting invasive plants and marveling at mushrooms recycling fallen leaves into new soil. A few lucky groups even caught glimpses of deer along the way!

The field trips may be done for the fall, but don't worry — they'll be back this spring, starting in late March and running through the end of the school year.

1

East Central Land Judging Competition

October 8th brought some friendly (and muddy) competition as 270 FFA students from 16 schools participated in the East Central Land Judging Contest. The top five teams advanced to the State Competition at Lake Wanhoo on October 22nd — congratulations to Elmwood-Murdock (1st), Central (2nd), Milford (3rd), East Butler (4th), and Mead (5th)!

At the State level, Elmwood-Murdock FFA claimed first place for the second year in a row, followed by Heartland, Beatrice, Doniphan-Trumbull, and Syracuse. These five teams have earned their spot in the National Competition in El Reno, Oklahoma, in May 2026. Way to go, teams — we're rooting for you!

2

Family Nature Nights

The LPSNRD's Family Nature Nights are in full swing, bringing families together to explore and celebrate the outdoors. In September, more than 270 students and their families joined the fun at Arnold Elementary.

And we're just getting started! Upcoming Family Nature Nights are planned at East Butler (Dwight and Brainard), Lakeview, Roper, Robinson, West Lincoln, Huntington, and St. Peter Elementary Schools.

Keep an eye out for flyers if your student's school is on the list! Interested in hosting a Nature Night at your school? Have a school administrator contact Adam Sutton at asutton@lpsnrd.org.

3

Classroom Presentations

When the LPSNRD Environmental Education (EE) team isn't out running big events, they're busy bringing the outdoors inside — visiting classrooms across the district and teaching students about Nebraska's amazing natural resources.

This fall, popular topics have included trees, Nebraska mammals, the water cycle, and the always-fascinating ground water flow model. (Trust us — kids love watching the "underground water" move!)

If you'd like to have someone from the NRD visit your classroom or just want to learn more about what we offer, drop a line to Adam Sutton at asutton@lpsnrd.org.

4



PIENING WATER QUALITY BASIN COMPLETED AFTER TWO DECADES OF PLANNING

As part of the LPSNRD water quality management plan, the Piening Water Quality Basin (PWQB) and its associated dam structure were completed in the fall of 2025. The dam structure is an earthen embankment that would create a reservoir with a normal pool surface area of 12 acres. The drainage basin area of this structure is approximately 512 acres and is within the Pawnee and Middle Creek watershed. NRD staff will perform annual inspections on the water quality basin as well as the 190 flood control structures in the district to ensure they are functioning properly.

ALL ABOUT PWQB:

- Improves water quality downstream, benefiting Pawnee Lake and Middle Creek, which then flows into Lincoln
- Maximum flood storage: 286 acre-feet
- Over 20 years to complete due to budget constraints and environmental regulations
- Located in western Lancaster County north of Hwy 34

LPSNRD LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District has launched a redesigned website with a clean layout, easier navigation, and new tools to help users quickly find what they need.

A key feature of the update is the Resource Browser, a central tool that allows users to search, filter, and download forms, maps, and reports from one location. The new site-wide search bar also helps users find specific topics or pages without needing to navigate multiple menus.

Together, these improvements make the LPSNRD website more user-friendly and accessible for residents, landowners, and outdoor enthusiasts.

UPCOMING LPSNRD EVENTS

- **Mid-Winter**
Test Your Well Night
- **Late Winter/Early Spring**
Test Your H2O Trivia Night

Want to know what's happening next? Scan the QR code to the right to check out our Events page for the most current schedule of NRD meetings, educational workshops, and community activities. Events are updated weekly, so be sure to visit often to stay in the loop.





LONG-TIME WATER RESOURCES COORDINATOR RETIRES AFTER 16 YEARS WITH LPSNRD

Professional Geologist with the American Institute of Professional Geologists, he has built a respected career dedicated to protecting and managing Nebraska's water resources.

His professional journey began in the 1980s at the Central Platte NRD, followed by several years with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Control and a teaching role at Doane College. In the 1990s, he returned to Lincoln to work at the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, later becoming the first NARD-DEQ Liaison.

Joining LPSNRD in 2009, Dick served as a Water Resources Specialist and later as Water Resources Coordinator, playing a key role in ground water management and airborne electromagnetic (AEM) mapping projects. He was also

actively involved in the Groundwater Management Districts Association.

Reflecting on his career, he shared, "NRDs are unique and one of the best mechanisms in managing water resources. How lucky we are to have the NRD system."

Among his proudest accomplishments are developing a geologic atlas using AEM scanning and helping update the Ground Water Management Plan (GWMP). When asked what he will miss most, he said simply, "The people and the friendships."

Although retiring, Dick will remain with LPSNRD part-time into 2026 to help complete the GWMP update—ensuring his legacy of stewardship continues. His experience, insight, and good humor will be greatly missed by colleagues and partners alike.

After 16 years of dedicated service, Dick Ehrman, Water Resources Coordinator, officially retired from the Lower Platte South NRD on October 3rd.

Dick holds a B.A. in Geology and History from Chadron State College and a M.S. in Geology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A Licensed Professional Geologist in Nebraska and a Certified

BACKYARD PRAIRIE POLLINATOR PROGRAM: SUCCESS & PREP FOR NEW YEAR

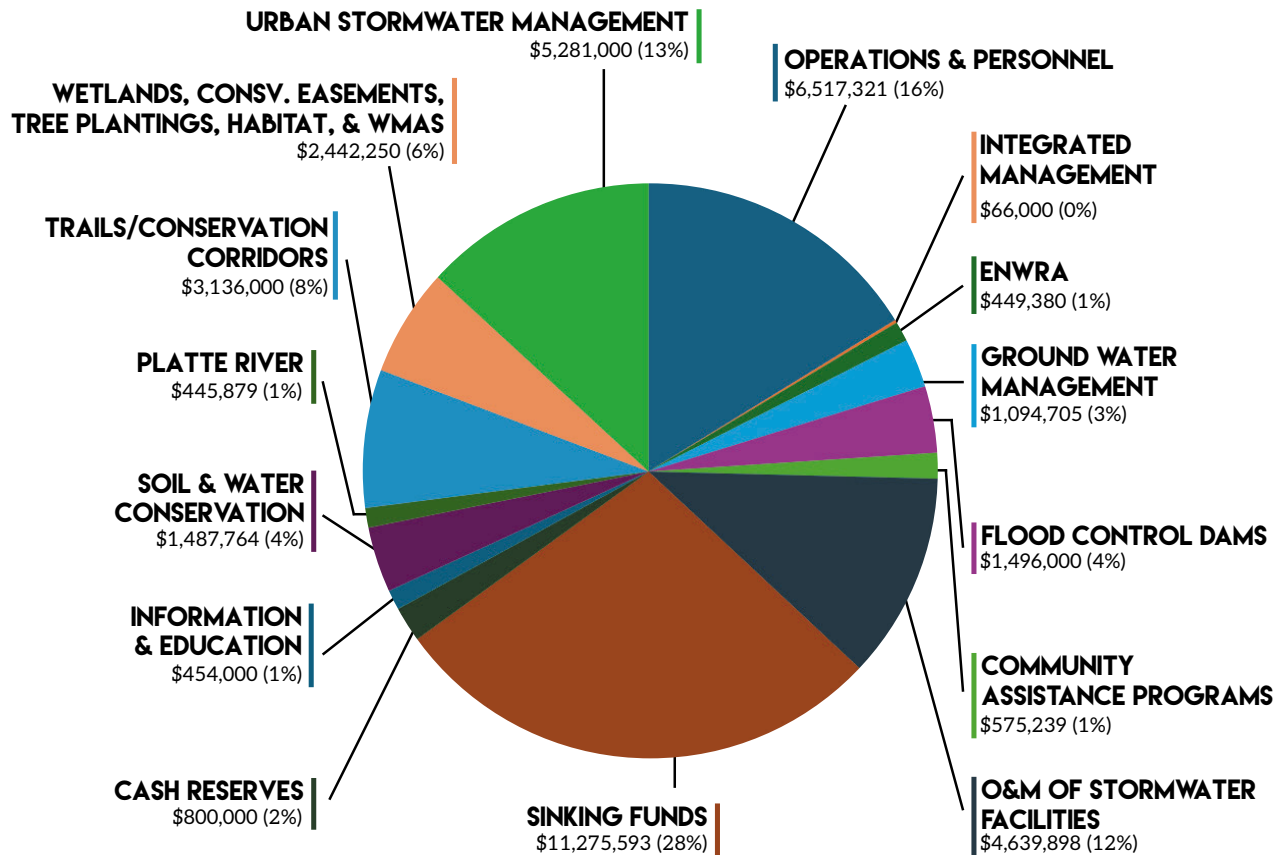


Pollinators of all shapes and sizes are finding more places to thrive, thanks in part to the success of the Backyard Prairie Pollinator Program. Designed to expand pollinator habitat across the District, the program has added 120 acres of valuable habitat since its launch.

The program has been a tremendous success in its first few years, attracting 690 participants since 2023. Nearly 70% of participants are from the City of Lincoln, highlighting strong community involvement and interest in supporting pollinators close to home. The program allows residents of the District to apply for up to ¼ acre of FREE native pollinator seed. The seed mix, which is pollinator-friendly, features approximately 40 different types of native wildflowers and various grass species. The custom seed mix is designed for use in both rural areas and within city limits.

Those interested in the program should visit our website on January 12th when applications go live. Residents are also encouraged to review any local ordinances that may apply. Seed is available to qualifying District residents on a first-come, first-served basis, and the program will close once all seed has been allocated. If you want to support pollinators and enjoy a little less mowing, be sure to apply!

LPSNRD 2025 EXPENDITURES



"The 2025-26 fiscal budget of \$40,161,029 enables us to invest in necessary infrastructure within our communities. We will continue to provide essential programs aimed at conservation within both urban and rural areas. In many cases, property tax dollars are leveraged to obtain state and federal dollars, stretching local investment even further."

-Lisa Lewis, Board of Directors Treasurer

SCAN TO VIEW THE ENTIRE REPORT ►



COST-SHARE CORNER Conservation Forestry Program

Also known as the Conservation Seedling Program, the Lower Platte South NRD's Conservation Forestry Program helps landowners establish, protect, and enhance tree plantings across the District. Cost-share assistance is available for tree and shrub seedlings, site preparation, planting, weed barrier installation, and drip irrigation systems.

Whether you're creating a new windbreak, restoring a shelterbelt, or improving wildlife habitat, this program makes it easier and more affordable to add lasting conservation benefits to your property. Healthy trees reduce wind erosion, provide shade and cover for wildlife, and improve air and water quality for generations to come.

Scan the QR code to the right to order your seedlings or learn more about this program.



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

<https://www.lpsnrd.org/resource-browser>
and searching the term "cost-share"

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

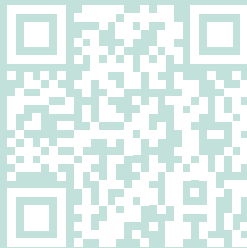
EXPLORE YOUR NRD

With winter settling in, it's the perfect time to bundle up and discover the frosty wonders of the Lower Platte South NRD. The serene landscapes take on a new charm, inviting you to explore their beauty and tranquility in a whole new way.

Our recreational areas offer countless opportunities for winter adventures. Whether you're drawn to the peaceful stillness of snow-dusted trails, frozen wetlands, and shimmering lakes, or you're seeking the ideal backdrop for winter hiking, birdwatching, or simply a brisk walk in the fresh air, the

LPSNRD has something for everyone. Best of all, our recreation areas are open to the public, no park pass required! So, why not lace up your snow boots or grab your binoculars to experience the magic of winter in your own backyard?

The Lower Platte South NRD is dedicated to preserving the natural splendor of our district. We are continually working to maintain a sustainable environment through the conservation of land, water, and wildlife, ensuring that these beautiful outdoor spaces can be enjoyed by future generations.



SCAN TO SEE ALL OF THE
LPSNRD RECREATION
OPPORTUNITIES!

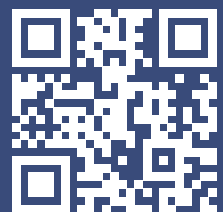
Or visit: www.lpsnrd.org/recreation

Get Digital

Know Your NRD is available in print from district newspapers and electronically by subscription through 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.

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