




## LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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### Memorandum

**Date:** March 10, 2022  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** David Potter, Assistant General Manager   
**RE:** Land Resources Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

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The Land Resources Subcommittee met virtually at 5:30 pm on Monday, March 7, 2022 via Zoom to take action on two agenda items and discuss a few others. Subcommittee members present included Gary Hellerich, Gary Aldridge, Bruce Johnson, Vern Barrett, Anthony Schutz, Mark Spangler and Ken Vogel. Members absent included Ron Nolte. Others present included Deborah Eagan, Paul Zillig, John Albert, Cory Schmidt, Tracy Zayac, Donna Reid, and David Potter. Hellerich called the meeting to order and gave a brief welcome. Potter reviewed the agenda.

a. The first item was to provide the subcommittee with an update on the status of current farm pond projects. Potter stated that applications were approved for Leo Benes (Saunders County) and Bruce Woita (Saunders County) in February 2020. Both ponds had been designed and were scheduled to be constructed late last summer. Due to county zoning, drain tube availability, and contractor work, construction was postponed until this coming summer. Both projects will hopefully be constructed within FY22. The Hunter pond in Seward County was constructed late summer 2021. Potter also informed the subcommittee that farm ponds are now taking approximately 1.5 years from approval through construction and we are now looking to budget them in the following fiscal year.

In February 2021 the Board of Directors approved the farm pond applications for Kevin Schneider at a cost-share not to exceed \$22,000; Colleen and Dennis Lux at cost-share not to exceed \$16,000; and for Ryan Stohlmann at a cost-share not to exceed \$42,000. Since that time, Ryan Stohlmann has decided to withdraw his application due to easement issues. The Schneider and Lux ponds are in design and are scheduled to be constructed summer 2022.

b. The second item on the agenda was to consider applications for farm pond cost-share. Potter stated that the District received four farm pond applications for 2022. All four applications are located in Seward County within the Twin Lakes Watershed and are eligible for additional cost-share up to 90% through the approved 319 grant. John Albert presented maps and information on each application to the subcommittee. Compiled general information pertaining to each of them was sent to the subcommittee members prior to the meeting. NRD and

NRCS Technicians (Albert, Sisel and Henery) had reviewed the applications and all four applications meet the criteria of the farm pond cost-share program.

The four farm pond applications include:

- Debra Troyer, Section 9-10-4, Seward County, \$52,500
- Andrew DeJong, Section 17-10-4, Seward County, \$20,750
- Thomas L. Sieck Rev. Trust, Section 21-10-4, Seward County, \$43,000
- Joshua Helge, Section 3-10-4, Seward County, \$24,000

Tracy Zayac presented the 90% cost-share breakdown of each application regarding 319 funding. Of the total \$140,250 cost-share requested, 60% (\$84,150) is 319 reimbursable. Questions were asked by the members regarding budget, the program criteria and eligibility, pond design, and the many benefits of farm ponds.

**It was moved by Vogel, seconded by Barret, and approved by the Subcommittee (with six voting yes and B. Johnson not voting) to recommend the Board of Directors approve the farm pond applications for Debra Troyer at a cost-share not to exceed \$52,500; Andrew DeJong at a cost-share not to exceed \$20,750; Thomas L. Sieck Rev. Trust at a cost-share not to exceed \$43,000; and Joshua Helge at a cost-share not to exceed \$24,000.**

c. The third item was to update the subcommittee on the status of the fall cost-share applications and construction deadline extension. The District has a construction deadline of February 1<sup>st</sup> for the district-wide fall cost-share applications. This date has been established to give the District an opportunity to evaluate the number cost-share projects during the construction period with the remaining budgeted funds. Staff had recently reached out to the six county NRCS offices to get a status on the various NRD land treatment projects. Based on the response, there are a number of projects that have been completed, a few that are in construction, others staked but no construction, and still others that have nothing done yet. There are also some that had been canceled for whatever reason. The late harvest could certainly have something to do with it. With some projects not completed or started and money in the budget, staff has extended that deadline to April 30, 2022. Staff had emailed the Land Resources Subcommittee members on January 31<sup>st</sup> informing them of the extension plans. The District's Summer Conservation Program construction period begins May 1<sup>st</sup> so this would complete those fall applications before the start of that program. Even if all the work is done with the outstanding fall applications, the District will still be within budget. This has been extended in past years when the current budget allows in order to get more conservation practices completed. We extended the construction deadline last year to April 30th and it worked well.

d. The fourth item was consideration of surface water quality BMP cost-share applications. The District has received one additional cost-share application for Fall work since the construction deadline had been extended to April 30<sup>th</sup>. The application is for terraces located in the Western portion. According to the July 1, 2021 Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-Share Program budget (which consists of FY'22 budgeted amounts, the allocated funds, obligated dollars, and available funds), neither the eastern or western portion is over obligated and there is still available funds for conservation work. In addition, the District has received three applications for the Summer Conservation Program. All three applications are located in the Western Portion. The construction period for the summer program is from May 1<sup>st</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>. The maximum cost-share amount is increased to \$17,500 (district-wide) and \$22,500 (targeted) for summer work and the cost-share dollars for our summer program will be included in the FY'23 budget. A map of the locations is attached.

The applications include:

- Steve Breunig, NE ¼ Section 5-13-6, Saunders Co., terraces \$12,500 – Fall work - Western Portion
- Woodruff Family LLC, SE ¼ Section 6-8-6, Lancaster Co., terraces \$17,500 – Summer - Western Portion
- Wolfe Farms LLC, NE ¼ Section 10-11-7, Lancaster Co., terraces \$17,500 – Summer - Western Portion
- Doug Drevo, NW ¼ Section 18-7-7, Lancaster Co., terraces \$17,500 – Summer - Western Portion

**It was moved by Schutz, seconded by Barret, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the surface water quality best management practices cost-share applications for Steve Breunig, Woodruff Family LLC, Wolfe Farms LLC, and Doug Drevo totaling an amount of \$65,000.**

e. The last discussion item was on the NRCS Local Working Group Meeting. Cory Schmidt, District Conservationist provided information on the upcoming Work Group meeting. He stated that the group is to provide advice on the priorities for many U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs and will meet in person on Wednesday, March 30, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the LPSNRD office. There is a Local Working Group in each NRD and membership on those groups includes Federal, State, County, Tribal or local government representatives. The Local Working Group recommends to the NRCS State Conservationist how conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), or Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) would be used most effectively in their area. Recommendations from the group can include special target areas, cost share rates on conservation programs, which conservation practices should have cost assistance, or how many dollars could be needed. Potter added that the meeting will again be hosted by LPSNRD and is open to the public. Subcommittee members were invited to attend. A public notice will be in the Journal Star and a news release will be sent to other media sources.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:39 pm.

Encl. 7