




## 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)

### Memorandum

**Date:** June 19, 2019  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** David Potter, Assistant General Manager   
**RE:** Land Resources Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

The Land Resources Subcommittee met at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, June 18, 2019 in the NRD large conference room in Lincoln to discuss and/or take action on four agenda items. Subcommittee members present included Gary Hellerich, Mark Spangler, Vern Barrett, Dave Landis, Gary Aldridge, and Bruce Johnson. Members absent included Mike DeKalb and Karen Amen. Others present included Larry Ruth, Bob Andersen, Greg Osborn, Don Jacobson, Paul Zillig, David Potter, and Cory Schmidt. Director Hellerich called the meeting to order at 5:30, gave a brief welcome, and reviewed the agenda.

#### (a.) LPSNRD Water Quality Management Plan.

The first item was to review and consider the LPSNRD District-wide Water Quality Management Plan. Potter gave a brief introduction to the plan and introduced Adam Rupe with JEO. Rupe gave power point presentation on the plan and the process.

In order to secure future 319 project funds for priority area projects and best management practices, a District-wide water quality management plan (WQMP) first needs to be approved. A request was been made to NDEQ for Section 319 grant funds, pursuant to the Federal Clean Water Act and the Nebraska Nonpoint Source Management Plan, which have been made available to NDEQ through the Region VII Office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. An agreement between the District and NDEQ to develop said plan was prepared and approved by the Board to proceed and receive \$150,000 in 319 Program Funds. The remaining \$100,000 of the project cost (60-40 cost share) was provided by the District. The agreement began September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and closed this month with the recent approval of the plan by EPA and submission of the final report and request for reimbursement to NDEQ.

The main purposes for developing the WQMP were to provide a concise summary of the condition of water resources in LPSNRD and to provide direction and a coordinated approach for addressing nonpoint source pollution. The WQMP provides one overarching plan that identifies and focuses on district-wide priorities. With the approved plan, efforts can be directed to project development and funding acquisition. District-wide plans provide numerous benefits including allowing access to Section 319 funding for groundwater and surface water projects, enhancing project buy-in and grant funding potential by integrating LPSNRD, agency, and community priorities, providing supporting information for project and grant application development, aiding

in LPSNRD and agency budget planning, and allowing for more effective leveraging of funds for projects and activities.

The WQMP documents a list of projects and practices aimed at improving water quality and removing impaired waters from the 303(d) list and provides specific project plans for implementation over the next 3-5 years. The WQMP area includes watersheds on a HUC8 scale within the district boundary, which include the Salt Creek watershed, Lower Platte watershed, and Keg-Weeping Water watershed. The Upper Salt Creek Basin and Upper Little Salt Creek Wetlands are listed as priorities for nonpoint source management in the State's 2015 NPS Management Plan. For each watershed on the HUC8 scale in the district, the WQMP identifies pollutant sources, pollutant loads, pollutant load reductions, an implementation strategy, schedule and monitoring.

Management approaches provided support for the goals set forth by NDEQ's *"Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Plan: Strategic Plan and Guidance for Implementing the Nebraska nonpoint Source Management Program – 2015 through 2030"* and by other programs targeted at reducing impacts of nonpoint source pollution by other agencies such as the NRCS and existing programs offered by the LPSNRD.

The WQMP requires an update every five (5) years, therefore the format takes this into consideration, and it was designed to be dynamic rather than fixed, allowing for minimal updating effort. Future updates will include a revised assessment of water quality data as compared to WQMP criteria and a determination of whether the current strategy is on track to meet plan goals and, if needed, new nonpoint source load estimates, revision of goals and objectives, updated management strategies and priorities, and updates to the resource and budget needs. When the plan is revised in five years, new areas may be targeted.

Specifically, the WQMP addresses the following 9-elements, as defined in Appendix C of EPA's Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories (issued 04/12/2013), for both surface water and groundwater resources:

1. Identification of pollutant sources;
2. Estimation of pollutant loads collectively or for separate identified water bodies or sub-basins and expected load reductions from management measures;
3. Identification of management practices appropriate to address resource threats or impairments;
4. An outreach strategy to educate and engage residents in protection and conserving water resources in the District;
5. A schedule for implementing activities to address identified resource threats or impairments;
6. Milestones to assess effective progress in implementing components of the WQMP;
7. Evaluation criteria to determine the effectiveness of actions taken to implement the WQMP;
8. A monitoring strategy to assess the impact of actions taken in implementing the WQMP;
9. Estimate needed technical and financial assistance, associated costs, and the sources and authorities that will be relied upon to implement the WQMP.

The WQMP had been vetted through expert and public reviews, and was accepted by NDEQ and EPA on May 6, 2019. With its approval, the WQMP will be the guiding document for water quality management in the District. A plan summary was provided to the subcommittee and the complete plan is available on the LPSNRD website at: <https://www.lpsnrd.org/publications/lpsnrd-plans>.

**It was moved by Landis, seconded by B. Johnson, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the LPSNRD Water Quality Management Plan.**

**(b.) Surface Water Quality Cost-Share Applications.**

The second item was to review and consider four applications for cost-share that qualify for the Summer Conservation Program which provides 75% up to \$15,000. One application is located in a targeted area (Salt Valley Lakes Watershed – Pawnee Lake) and is eligible for 85% cost share up to \$20,000. Funding for the four applications will come from the FY20 budget. Maps showing the locations of the proposed conservation practices were provided.

The four applications include:

- Cindy and Robert Arias – \$15,000 (75% SCP) for terraces, 14-12-6, Lancaster County
- Orville Pearson – \$11,796 (85% SCP-targeted) for terraces, 35-11-4, Seward County
- Josh Capp – \$15,000 (75% SCP) for terraces, 22-12-10, Cass County
- Landon Farms, Inc. - \$15,000 (75% SCP) for terraces, 18-12-9, Cass County

**It was moved by Landis, seconded by Barrett, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the four identified cost-share applications totaling an amount of \$56,796.**

**(c.) Modifications to the NRD Cover Crop Program.**

The third item was to discuss and consider modifications to the NRD’s Cover Crop Program. Staff provided some background on the district’s cover crop program and identified many important benefits of cover crops, including soil health, erosion control, and water quality.

In 2017 the District implemented a “Pilot Cover Crop Program” for two Community Water System Protection Areas (CWSPA). The CWSPA areas selected were the Phase 3 Elmwood CWSPA and the Phase 3 Weeping Water/Otoe RWD #2 CWSPA. This program was developed as another way to help improve ground water quality in CWSPA areas. The District received a couple applications and only one of those was planted and received cost-share.

In 2018 the Board of Directors approved NRD Cover Crop Program for the Salt Valley Lakes and Stevens Creek Targeted Areas, the Community Water System Protection Areas, and any Groundwater Management Phase 2 and 3 areas located within the Lower Platte South NRD and authorize the General Manager to approve applications up to the budgeted amount of the current fiscal year and report those approvals to the Land Resources Subcommittee. In the current program there are limitations to number of acres and cost-share, limitations on cover crop use, and other rules and specifications that are similar to the NRCS cover crop program.

Last year the District received three cost-share applications for cover crop. Only one of those was actually executed. There were many factors, mainly weather and late harvest, contributing to the limited applications and for only one of those 80-acre tracts being planted. During the FY20-24 LRIP process, members of the Land Resources Subcommittee discussed additional areas eligible for the Cover Crop Program and to recommend including fields where conservation practices (terraces) are currently being installed in the NRD’s Summer Conservation Program.

Cory Schmidt, NRCS District Conservationist discussed other cover crop programs offered by NRCS and provided information on planting dates, types of seed, etc.

Although there may be interest district-wide, the identified areas, as modified, will benefit from the cover crop program the most at this time. The proposed changes to the NRD Cover Crop Cost-Share Program, application, and brochure were provided to the subcommittee for review, as well a map illustrating the targeted areas, CWSPAs, and the Phase 2 and 3 areas.

**It was moved by Barrett, seconded by Landis, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the modifications to the NRD Cover Crop Program.**

**(d.) Cost-share Application Prioritization Policy.**

The final item was to discuss the NRD's cost-share application prioritization policy. With more cost-share applications being approved for the Summer Conservation Program and those payments coming out of the following fiscal year's budget, it was suggested that we discuss including them as part of the prioritization process.

As the fall applications for the FY20 Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-Share Program are considered in July-September, the District will review FY20 budgeted amounts, the allocated funds, obligated dollars, and the available funds. Depending on the number of applications received, staff, the review committees, and the Land Resources Subcommittee will also refer to the prioritization commonly used by the District (attached). It's important to note that FY2020 cost-share program budgets will take into account those payments made in FY2020 for jobs completed in the previous fiscal year, the summer applications that were approved this year, and the fall applications.

The subcommittee discussed possible scenarios, implications, and limitations. No changes were recommended at this time and the subcommittee may discuss it in the future.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Cc: Cory Schmidt