




## LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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### Memorandum

**Date:** August 16, 2018  
**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 at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, August 15, 2018 just prior to the Board meeting in the NRD small conference room in Lincoln to discuss and take action on two agenda items. Subcommittee members present included Mark Spangler, Vern Barrett, Dick Bolte, Mike DeKalb, Gary Hellerich, Dave Landis, Larry Ruth and Gary Aldridge. Others present included David Potter, Donna Reid, Dick Ehrman, and Cory Schmidt. Mark Spangler called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

a. The first item was to consider the Surface Water Quality Cost-Share Applications.

Potter and Reid informed the subcommittee that the district received a total of 136 Cost-Share Assistance Applications (135 fall, 1 summer) for conservation work and FY'19 NRD funds. Applications were divided into the Eastern and Western areas and submitted to those appropriate Review Groups for consideration.

The Western NSWCP Cost-Share Review Group met Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00 p.m. at the LPSNRD Office to review the 69 applications (12 targeted, 57 district-wide), including four (1 summer, 3 fall district-wide) that were submitted after the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. The group also reviewed the proposed July 1, 2018 Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-Share Program budget consisting of the FY'19 budgeted amounts, the allocated funds, obligated dollars, and the available funds. Review group members attending included Gary Hellerich, Vern Barrett, Dave Landis and Bob Andersen. Others present included John Albert, Joe Peterson, Cory Schmidt, Donna Reid and David Potter. It was moved by Landis, seconded by Hellerich and unanimously approved to recommend approval of those Western Portion, SVL and Stevens Creek applications totaling the amount available in the program budget, including the four applications submitted late.

The Eastern NSWCP Cost-Share Review Group met Thursday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 a.m. at the Weeping Water NRCS Office to review the 71 applications received. The group also reviewed the proposed July 1, 2018 Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-Share Program budget consisting of the FY'19 budgeted amounts, the allocated funds, obligated dollars, and the available funds. Review group members attending included Mark Spangler, Ron Svoboda, Dick Bolte and Mike DeKalb. Others present included Cindy Spilinek, Joe Peterson, Cory Schmidt, James Conradi, Donna Reid and David Potter. It was determined that there were more application funds requested than were budgeted for. It was also determined that a landowner had submitted two applications. It was moved by DeKalb, seconded by Bolte, and unanimously approved to recommend approval of those Eastern Portion applications totaling the amount available in the program budget and to eliminate those applications according to the prioritization process.

The District's program funding budgets and prioritization commonly used were provided to the subcommittee. It was noted that the FY2019 cost-share program budgets also take into account those payments made in FY2019 for jobs completed in the previous fiscal year, the summer applications that were approved for this year, and the fall applications. Staff also determined that a landowner had submitted an application for a property in Lancaster County (west) and for one in Cass County (east). With a limit of only one fall application per landowner, a decision was made to prioritize the Lancaster County property. After staff performed the prioritization process as directed by the Review Groups, there were 122 District cost-share applications for consideration, including 12 Targeted, 57 Eastern, and 69 Western totaling an amount of \$1,234,971 (Targeted \$162,535, East \$526,192, West \$546,244). The applications are identified on a spreadsheet and map and provided to the subcommittee.

**It was moved by Landis, seconded by DeKalb, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the 122 identified cost-share applications totaling an amount of \$1,234,971.**

b. The second item was to review and consider the District's proposed Cover Crop Program.

Potter reminded the subcommittee that one of the actions approved by the Land Resources Subcommittee in preparation of the FY2019 Long Range Implementation Plan (LRIP) and proposed within the budget is a Cover Crop Program for the District. At that time, the subcommittee recommended to develop a cover crop program in Salt Valley Lakes and Stevens Creek Targeted Areas and implement cover crop BMP in targeted areas. A copy of the LRIP action was provided to the subcommittee.

Last year the District implemented a "Pilot Cover Crop Program" for two Community Water System Protection Areas (CWSPA). Cory Schmidt, District Conservationist, and Dick Ehrman drafted a pilot program from other NRD and NRCS program examples and identified two locations for implementation. 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 one of those was successfully completed. A cover crop was seeded, grown and successfully terminated in the Weeping Eater/Otoe RWD #2 CWSPA and the District learned a few things regarding the program and process that should be changed. Although there was interest in the program, the Water Resources Subcommittee did not propose any such program this fiscal year because of the \$50,000 proposed budget line item for the District Cover Crop Program approved by the Land Resources Subcommittee.

Schmidt and Potter amended last year's "pilot" program (qualifications and regulations) to develop the District 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.

After developing a draft of the program, staff looked at the Community Water System Protection Areas and the Phase 2 and 3 areas located within the Lower Platte South NRD as possible additional areas for consideration of such program. Cover crops have many important benefits, including soil health, erosion control, and water quality, and consideration should be given to all of these. Although there may be interest district-wide, the identified areas will benefit from the cover crop program the most at this time. The proposed Cover Crop Cost-Share Program and application were provided to the subcommittee, as well as maps of the targeted areas, CWSPAs, and the Phase 2 and 3 areas. A fourth map illustrated all three area classifications on it.

There was discussion on the benefits of cover crops, areas of implementation, and added restrictions. Potter, Schmidt and Ehrman answered questions of the subcommittee. It was recommended to also include "harvesting" of the cover crop as a restriction to the program.

**It was moved by Hellerich, seconded by Landis, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the District Cover Crop Program for the Salt Valley Lakes and Stevens Creek Targeted Areas, the Community Water System Protection Areas, and any 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.**

Prior to adjournment, there was some discussion that staff and the subcommittee should consider looking at deadline dates for project completion and whether dates should be moved up. The completion deadline for fall cost-share projects is February 1<sup>st</sup>. Extensions to June 1<sup>st</sup> have been granted in the past based on budget, weather, and other circumstances. With the fiscal year ending on June 30<sup>th</sup>, there has been a struggle to get payment requests in before fiscal year end.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.